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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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Security forces kill 28 Naxalites in Chhattisgarh

A cache of weapons, including an AK-47 rifle and one SLR, were also recovered from the encounter spot PHOTO: PTI

DANTEWADA, 4 OCT

In one of the biggest operations against Maoists in Chhattisgarh, security personnel killed 28 Naxalites in a fierce encounter in the Bastar region on Friday, a senior police official said.

The gunfight broke out at around 1 pm in the forest between Thulthuli and Nendur villages in Abhujmaad on the Narayanpur-Dantewada inter-district border, when a joint team of security personnel was out on anti-Naxal operation, Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraj P told PTI over the phone.

Personnel belonging to the state police's District Reserve Guard (DRG) and Special Task Force (STF) were involved in the operation, he said.

Sundarraj informed that 28 Naxalites were gunned down in the encounter.

A cache of weapons, including an AK-47 rifle and one SLR (self-loading rifle), were also recovered from the encounter spot, he said.

- 185 Maoists have been gunned down in separate gun battles in the Bastar comprising 7 districts, including Dantewada Narayanpur, so far this year

Earlier, Dantewada Superintendent of Police Gaurav Rai had said around 30 Naxalites were killed in the gun battle.

After the latest encounter, 185 Maoists have been gunned down by security forces in separate gun battles in the Bastar region comprising seven districts, including Dantewada and Narayanpur, so far this year, police said.

On 16 April, as many as 29 Naxalites, including some higher-ranking cadres, were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Kanker district. —PTI

Stage set for Haryana Assembly polls today

CHANDIGARH, 4 OCT

The fate of Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Vinesh Phogat of the Congress besides JJP's Dushyant Chautala and 1027 other candidates will be decided today as elections to the 90-member Haryana assembly will be held with over 2 crore people eligible to vote. The ruling BJP is eyeing a hat-trick of wins in the state while the Congress is hoping to make a comeback after a decade. Counting will be held on 8 October. 2,03,54,350 including 8,821 centurions, are eligible to exercise their vote. Voting will be held from 7 am to 6 pm. —PTI

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Maldives Prez Muizzu to visit India on 7 Oct

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu is expected to visit India starting on 7 October as per sources. This will mark Muizzu's first standalone bilateral visit to the country since assuming office last year. Recently, on the sidelines of the 79th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, Muizzu told ANI, that he is planning to visit India as soon as possible. He also praised the "very strong" bilateral relationship between the two countries." This will notably be the second time that Muizzu is visiting India this year after attending the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier this June. —ANI

WB junior doctors call off 'total cease work'

KOLKATA, 4 OCT

Agitating junior doctors demanding justice for the RG Kar medic on Friday evening called off their 'total cease work' at state-run medical colleges and hospitals but threatened to launch a hunger strike till death if their demands were not met by the West Bengal government within 24 hours. "We are calling off our 'total cease work'. But we will continue our sit-in protest. We will give the state administration 24 hours to fulfill our demands or else we will start a hunger strike till death," an agitating doctor, Debasish Halder of Kolkata Medical College and Hospital, said. The doctors had earlier gone on a complete 'cease work' for 42 days following the rape and murder of a fellow medic at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on 9 August. —PTI

21-year-old Pune woman raped by 3, friend assaulted

PUNE, 4 OCT

A 21-year-old woman was allegedly raped by three unidentified persons, who also tied her male friend to a tree and assaulted him at an isolated place on the outskirts of Pune city, police said on Friday. The horrific incident took place in the Bopdev Ghar area at around 11 pm on Thursday and a day later police released sketches of two of the suspects as they intensified efforts to trace the culprits and sought help of citizens to nab them. The incident came to light around 5 am on Friday after the woman along with her male friend approached a government-run Sassoon General Hospital in Pune. —PTI

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Laddu row: SC replaces Andhra SIT, includes CBI

Probe into animal fat claim is to assuage feelings of crores: SC

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

The Supreme Court on Friday set up a five-member independent SIT to probe the allegations of animal fat used in preparing Tirupati laddus to "assuage the feelings of crores of people" while making clear that the court cannot be used as a "political battleground".

The development assumes significance as the top court-appointed panel substitutes the Andhra Pradesh government's special investigation team (SIT) constituted on 26 September.

"We don't want this to be turned into a political drama. There are sentiments of crores of people throughout the world," a bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan observed.

The independent SIT will comprise two officers each from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) – to be nominated by its director - and the Andhra Pradesh Police – to be named by the state government. The fifth member will be a senior official of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) picked by its chairperson. The SIT will be supervised by the CBI director.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu had claimed that animal fat was used in preparing Tirupati laddus during the previous YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led regime in the state, triggering a massive political row.The bench clarified that it has not gone into the allegations and counter-allegations made in either of the petitions or the stand of the respondents, including the state. On 30 September, the apex court said the laboratory test report was "not clear at all" and it prima facie indicated that "rejected ghee" was subjected to the test. —PTI

SC protects scribe booked in UP

The Supreme Court granted interim protection to journalist Abhishek Upadhyay who was booked in Uttar Pradesh for being "critical" of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's government. The top court said on Friday, criminal cases should not be slapped against journalists because their writings are perceived as criticism of the government. —PTI

Sub-classification of SC/ST: SC junks review pleas

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

The Supreme Court has dismissed a batch of pleas seeking review of its judgment which held that states are constitutionally empowered to make sub-classifications within the Scheduled Castes for granting reservation.

A seven-judge Constitution bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices BR Gavai, Vikram Nath, Bela Trivedi, Pankaj Mithal, Manoj Misra and Satish Chandra Sharma said there is no error apparent on the face of the record.

The apex court, however, made it clear that states have to make sub-classification on the basis of "quantifiable and demonstrable data" of backwardness and representation in government jobs and not on "whims" and as a matter of "political expediency". —PTI

Israel targets Nasrallah's likely successor

BEIRUT, 4 OCT

According to US and Israeli media, **Hashem Safieddine**, cousin of slain chief Hassan Nasrallah and a prominent Hezbollah figure touted as a possible successor, was the target of a recent Israeli air strike on south Beirut.

Meanwhile, a source close to Hezbollah said on Friday said that Lebanese militant group's slain chief Hassan Nasrallah has been temporarily buried in a secret location for fear Israel would target a large funeral.

"Hassan Nasrallah has been temporarily buried, until the circumstances allow for a public funeral," the source said, after an Israeli strike killed the leader last week.

The source said a public funeral had been impossible to hold "for fear of Israeli threats they would target mourners and the place of his burial."

Shiite Muslim rites provide for such a temporary burial when circumstances prevent a proper funeral or the deceased cannot be buried where they wished.

Some 100 Hezbollah operatives have been killed during Israeli operations in southern Lebanon; (Incet) Hashem Safieddine PHOTO: X

In another incident , Israeli bombing caused large explosions in Beirut, including one close to the international airport during a further night of air strikes targeting Hezbollah.The airport borders Dahieh, Hezbollah's strong-hold in the capital. Plumes of smoke could be seen over the city on Friday morning.

> **The Economic Conclave here in India is happening at a time when the two big regions are close to war-like situations. They are crucial for the global economy and energy security** -Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Hezbollah operatives killed in southern Lebanon

Some 100 Hezbollah operatives have been killed during Israeli operations in southern Lebanon in the past day, according to IDF assessments.

The operatives were killed both in airstrikes and during fighting on the ground, the military says. —Agencies

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PHOTO: PTI

CRASH LANDING FOR M'RASHTRA LEADERS

MUMBAI, 4 OCT

Maharashtra Assembly Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal and at least two tribal legislators jumped off the third floor of the Mantralaya building here and landed on the safety nets on Friday afternoon, an official said. Zirwal and the others were protesting against the inclusion of the Dhangar community in the quota for tribals. None of the protesters were seriously injured in the incident, the official said. —PTI

TO STRENGTHEN TIES

Will help rebuild economy: India to Sri Lanka

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on Friday PHOTO: PTI

COLOMBO, 4 OCT

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday met Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and discussed "ways to deepen ongoing cooperation and strengthen India-Sri Lanka ties," and assured India's continued support to the island nation's economic rebuilding.

"Honoured to call on President @anuradisanayake today in Colombo. Conveyed warm greetings of President Droupadi Murmu and PM @narendramodi," Jaishankar posted on X.

Jaishankar is the first foreign dignitary to visit Sri Lanka since the National People's Power (NPP) government led by Dissanayake came to power on 23 September.

"Reviewed various dimensions of India-Sri Lanka partnership. Assured him of India's continued support to Sri Lanka's economic rebuilding. Our Neighbourhood First Policy and Sagar outlook will always guide the advancement of India-Sri Lanka ties," he added. Sri Lanka is India's key maritime neighbour in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and occupies a special place in its initiatives such as 'SAGAR' (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and the 'Neighbourhood First Policy.'

SL releases 50 fishermen

Sri Lanka on Friday released 50 Indian fishermen arrested by its Navy for allegedly poaching in the island nation's waters, the Indian mission here said.

Fishermen from both countries are arrested frequently for inadvertently trespassing into each other's waters.

"Returning home! 50 Indian fishermen from Mayiladuthurai, Pudukottai and Nagapattinam have been released today and will be repatriated from Sri Lanka to Tamil Nadu later this week," the High Commission of India in Colombo posted on X along with some photographs of the released fishermen. —PTI

EAM to visit Pak to attend SCO summit

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

Jaishankar will travel to Pakistan to attend a conclave of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in mid-October. It will be for the first time in nearly nine years that India's external affairs minister will travel to Pakistan even as the ties between the two neighbours remained frosty over the Kashmir issue and cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan. —PTI

UNCLEAN WATER TANK

1,000 ill in Udupi due to polluted water

UDUPI, 4 OCT

More than one thousand residents at Uppunda in Udupi district fell ill after drinking contaminated water from a local overhead water tank, Health Department officials said on Friday.

"The condition of none of them is serious. Most of them have already recovered with proper medication from the local health centre," an official said.

The affected, mostly from Karki Kalli and Madikal wards of Uppunda Gram Panchayat in Byndoor taluk, had reported symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhoea, they said.

PHOTO: PTI

"Many households witnessed multiple family members displaying similar symptoms, with several homes reporting three or more individuals being affected after drinking water from overhead water tank in Kasinadi," an official said.

The Udupi district health officer Dr IP Gadadh said strains of "waterborne pathogen salmonella bacillary" were found in the water supplied to the two wards.

"We have sent a team to investigate this condition to both villages and the nearby villages that use the same water source, on September 30 and we had found the strains of this bacteria in 56 cases. Till today, we have found about 150 cases," he said.

According to Gram Panchayat members of the two wards, there was no water supply for three days before this incident and thereafter, the villages got muddy water and those who filtered or boiled it before drinking had no symptoms.

"We are investigating the cause for the supply of muddy water," Gadadh said.

Local residents blamed poor maintenance of the water tank for the contamination of water.

The water supply from the Kasinadi overhead tank has been suspended.

Villagers have demanded an investigation into the incident and immediate measures to address the issue, officials said. —PTI

Mysuru official hosts Jawa motorcycle rally

MYSURU, 4 OCT

Commissioner for Archaeology, Heritage and Museum, A Devaraju on Friday said that Dasara showcases the rich tradition and culture to the world. The officer was addressing the gathering after launching the Jawa motorcycle ride organised by the Department at Town Hall premises. He said that his department is also holding a cycle rally for school students along the heritage structures route in the City to sensitise them about the protection of these heritage monuments. Instructions have been given to the department of school education and literacy to open heritage clubs in schools to spread the importance of conservation of heritage monuments in their vicinity. Mysuru brand stalls were also opened during exhibition. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

State launches joint plan for cervical cancer elimination

BENGALURU, 4 OCT

ECHO India, a not-for-profit organisation revolutionising capacity-building in healthcare, education, and livelihood, supported the launch of a joint initiative by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Karnataka, titled 'Accelerating Cervical Cancer Elimination. The initiative aims to advance efforts to eliminate cervical cancer in the state. Held at Vikasa Soudha, Bengaluru, the event saw the presence of Shri Dinesh Gundu Rao, Hon'ble Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of Karnataka, who delivered the inaugural address. "In addition to cervical cancer, ECHO India actively collaborates with State departments and medical institutes to strengthen cancer care through its 'All Teach, All Learn' approach. *—PTI*

2nd case filed against MLA Anvar over phone tapping

MALAPPURAM, 4 OCT

Kerala police have registered one more case against independent MLA, PV Anvar, for allegedly leaking official secrets in connection with the phone tapping matter, officials said on Friday. The case was registered based on a complaint filed by the Superintendent of Police, Special Operations Group, on 3 October, Manjeri police said. Earlier on 29 September, Karukachal police registered a case against Anvar for allegedly tapping the phone calls of certain senior officials of the state in an illegal manner. FIR says Anvar illegally intercepted the telecommunication system and tapped the phone details of senior officials in the state affecting public safety. *—PTI*

5 held for sexually assaulting two girls in Telangana

HYDERABAD, 4 OCT

Five men were arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting and harassing two minor girls in Jangaon district of Telangana, police said on Friday. The girls escaped from a rehabilitation centre in Saidabad here last month. The centre had lodged a missing complaint with the Saidabad police. The girls reached Jangaon bus stand from where one of them went along with a man known to her, but was allegedly sexually harassed by three persons. Another girl was also similarly assaulted by a 'paan' shop owner and his friend who runs a bakery on the pretext of offering shelter to her at the bakery, police said. Both girls were later found at the Jangaon bus stand by the police, who rescued them and shifted them to the rehabilitation centre in Hyderabad. *—PTI*

Heightened activities in Cong as CM faces rising political heat

Many leaders seek CM's post over MUDA scam

BENGALURU, 4 OCT

With Chief Minister Siddaramaiah facing rising political heat over a probe against him in the MUDA case, Congress party in Karnataka is witnessing heightened political activities behind the scenes with a section of leaders seeking to position themselves in the event of his exit.

Amid demands by BJP and JD(S) for his resignation over MUDA (Mysuru Urban Development Authority) 'scam', Chief Minister has repeatedly asserted in recent days that he won't quit as he hasn't done anything wrong and would fight the case legally.

Lokayukta police and the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) have initiated separate investigations against Siddaramaiah and others into the alleged irregularities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife Parvathi B M by the MUDA.

Senior leaders and Ministers G Parameshwara, HC Mahadevappa (both from SC communities) and Satish Jarkiholi (ST) met recently, fueling speculations about their collective strategy in case the party high command opts for leadership change over the 'scam' which has cast a shadow over the 16-month-old Siddaramaiah government.

- Leaders such as RV Deshapande and MB Patil have openly aired their Chief Ministerial aspirations, adding to the discomfiture of the ruling dispensation

Earlier, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who is also the State party chief, also had separate meetings with Parameshwara and Jarkiholi.

"Parameshwara and Shivakumar are seen to be front-runners for the top post in case Siddaramaiah is forced to go," a senior party leader said.

Jarkiholi has said in the past that he will be in the race for CM's post only in 2028 when the next Assembly elections are due in Karnataka.

The Congress leadership has backed Siddaramaiah on the MUDA issue and sees no reason for his resignation. The ruling party has accused the BJP of misusing the central agencies and the Governor's office to destabilise an elected government.

Leaders such as RV Deshapande and MB Patil have openly aired their Chief Ministerial aspirations adding to the discomfiture of the ruling dispensation but some in the party see nothing wrong in that.

Congress President M Mallikarjun Kharge has said the party is standing with CM . *—PTI*

MUDA CASE

Lokayyukta officials visit the 14 MUDA sites that was allegedly illegally alloted to CM Siddaramaiah's wife, on Friday *PHOTO: ANI*

Lokayukta conducts spot inspection of Parvathi's 14 plots

MYSURU, 4 OCT

Lokayukta officials on Friday conducted spot inspection of the 14 MUDA sites, which were allegedly illegally allotted to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi BM.

Accompanied by officials of Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) and district administration, they conducted the measurement of the plots..

Social activist Snehamayi Krishna, one of the complaints in the MUDA case, was present as he was also summoned by the Lokayukta for the procedure.

"I was summoned today by the Lokayukta for the spot inspection of 14 sites," Krishna told reporters.

Lokayukta police on 27 September registered an FIR against Siddaramaiah, his wife, brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy, Devaraju, from whom Mallikarjuna Swamy purchased land and gifted it to her and others, following a Special Court order on 25 September.

The order of the Special Court came a day after High Court upheld the sanction granted by the Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot to conduct an investigation against Siddaramaiah.

MUDA on Tuesday decided to take back the 14 plots, following her decision to relinquish their ownership and possession. The MUDA has ordered to cancel the sale deed of these plots, its Commissioner AN Raghunandan said. *—PTI*

Lokayukta awaits prosecution of 206 officials

Karnataka Lokayukta's recommendation to prosecute 206 officials across 27 departments in various cases is awaiting government permission for months, officials said on Friday. These officials include 65 in the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department, 40 in the Revenue Department and 25 in the Urban Development Department, official sources said. "As on 27 September, the number is 206 officials. These figures change over the period of time but the pendency is high in some departments," a top Lokayukta official told PTI. "It's ironic. *—PTI*

'Cong targeting Savarkar to divert from MUDA'

BENGALURU, 4 OCT

Karnataka BJP president BY Vijayendra on Friday accused Congress government of targeting Hindutva ideologue Vinayak Damodar Savarkar just to divert public attention from the MUDA 'scam'.

Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao claimed on Wednesday that Savarkar used to eat meat and was not against cow slaughter.

In an online post, Vijayendra said: "This is a betrayal of our national heroes! Congress government, driven by its greed for power, has shamefully targeted Veer Savarkar - a patriot who dedicated his life to India's freedom - just to divert public attention from their corruption in the #MUDAScam. This desperate ploy to mislead the public is unacceptable."

PHOTO: PTI

- Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao claimed on Wednesday that Savarkar used to eat meat and was not against cow slaughter

He further said that BJP will fight until the "corrupt leaders" of Congress are held accountable.

"It's not just an attack on Savarkar, but an insult to every Indian who values our nation's sacrifices.

As Vir Savarkar himself said, 'Independence is never given, it is always taken.' No lies or distractions will hide the truth, and we will fight until your corrupt leaders are held accountable!," Vijayendra added.

Minister Rao had claimed: "Savarkar, a 'Chitpavan Brahmin', used to eat meat. He was a non-veg eater and he was not against cow slaughter. He was modern in a way." *—PTI*

THREE ENGINEERING COLLEGES IN BENGALURU RECEIVE BOMB THREATS

BENGALURU, 4 OCT

Three engineering colleges in the City received emails on Friday afternoon saying that bombs had been planted on their premises, which later turned out to be hoax, said police. According to police sources, the Bengaluru Institute of Technology and BMS College of Engineering, both in Basavanagudi and MS Ramaiah Institute of Technology in Sadashivanagar received the bomb threat via email. After thorough investigation, police arrived at a conclusion that it was a hoax email. "A case has been booked in Hanumanth Nagar Police Station to trace the source (of the mail)," Deputy Commissioner of Police (South Division) Lokesh B Jagalasar said in a statement. Taj West End Hotel had received a similar threat last week and it was found to be a hoax. *—Salar News*

Apologise or face ban: Sena threatens Dinesh

THANE, 4 OCT

The ruling Shiv Sena in Maharashtra on Friday sought an apology from Karnataka Minister and Congress leader Dinesh Gundu Rao for his critical comments on Hindutva ideologue Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.

Party spokesperson Naresh Mhaske warned Rao will not be allowed to enter Maharashtra, where Savarkar is a revered figure, if he failed to issue an apology within 24 hours.

Dinesh triggered a controversy with his remarks that Savarkar used to eat meat and was not against cow slaughter.

"Savarkar, a 'Chitpavan Brahmin', used to eat meat. He was a non-veg eater and he was not against cow slaughter. He was modern in a way," Rao said at an event in Bengaluru on Wednesday.

Addressing a press conference at Anand Ashram in Thane city, Mhaske targeted Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray, a Congress ally, for not raising his voice against grave insult of the freedom fighter.

Naresh Mhaske *PHOTO: ANI*

The former Maharashtra CM has no right to put up photos of Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray, a Hindutva proponent, asserted the Lok Sabha MP from Thane.

The Shiv Sena spokesperson maintained the ideology of Congress has become "corrupt".

Mhaske asked Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray, son of Uddhav Thackeray, to clarify his party's position on Hindutva and remarks against Savarkar.

The Assembly polls in Maharashtra are likely to be held next month. *—PTI*

Artist Akshay Jalihal draws a massive rangoli of Lord Durga on the occasion of Dasara at GT Mall in Bengaluru on Friday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

YUVA DASARA CELEBRATIONS

DATE: 6-10 OCTOBER
PLACE: PRIVATE GROUNDS, UTTANAHALLI, MYSURU

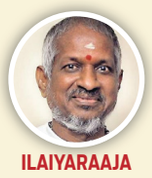
CONCERTS

SHREYA GHOSHAL
6 October

RAVI BASRUR
7 October

Bollywood rapper Badshah: 8 October

AR RAHMAN
9 October



ILAIYARAAJA
10 October

Ticket prices:	Rs 5,000-Rs 8,000
Crowd allowed:	5,000 people
Budget:	Rs 40 crore
No. of KSRTC buses:	200 to 250 buses
Police deployed:	1,239

PAWAN VS UDHAYANIDHI

DyCMs clash over Sanatan Dharma remarks

CHENNAI, 4 OCT

Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin on Friday retorted with a cryptic comment "Let's wait and see" in response to his Andhra Pradesh counterpart Pawan Kalyan's remark on those opposing 'Sanatan Dharma' getting wiped out.

Udhayanidhi, whose remark last year calling for "eradication" of 'Sanatan Dharma', triggered a political row, responded with "Ok, let's wait and see" when reporters sought his reaction to Kalyan's warning.

Janasena party chief on Thursday said that "you cannot wipe out Sanatan Dharma. If anyone tries to wipe out Sanatan Dharma, let me tell you from the feet of Lord Balaji, you will be wiped out."

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin *PHOTO: ANI*

While addressing a gathering on "Varahi Declaration" over the Tirupati laddu controversy in Tirupati, Kalyan said "don't say that Sanatan Dharma is like a virus, and it will destroy... Whoever said this let me tell you sir. You cannot wipe out Sanatan Dharma. If anyone tries to wipe out Santana Dharma, let me tell you, from the feet of Lord Balaji, you will be wiped out." PTI

Meanwhile, Kalyan has also said that the laddu adulteration issue is just a tip of the iceberg and there are many more decisions taken during the previous regime that have to be investigated.

TDP, Andhra CM welcomes SC's decision on SIT probe

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday welcomed the Supreme Court's decision on constituting an independent Special Investigation Team to conduct a probe.

Senior YSRCP leader and former minister RK Roja said apex court's direction is a welcoming development. *—PTI*

Minister's wife files plaint against BJP over X post

BENGALURU, 4 OCT

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao's wife Tabassum Rao filed a complaint with the State Women's Commission on Friday, accusing the BJP of making communally charged comments against her on X.

This comes after the Health Minister left BJP fuming with his "Savarkar was a beef eater" comment. BJP icon VD Savarkar was a Chitpavan Brahmin. Dinesh had said, "Savarkar was a non-veg eater and he was not against cow slaughter... Some say that he used to eat beef as well. As a Brahmin, he used to eat meat and was openly propagating eating meat."

The comments were made in the backdrop of Maharashtra naming cow as "Rajmata Gomata" ahead of Assembly elections.

BJP wasted no time in trolling Dinesh online. In one of its post on X, BJP wrote: "Did your father Gundurao of Brahmin society tell you that Veer Savarkar of Brahmin society used to eat beef or did your wife Tabassum of Muslim society tell you?" In her complaint, Tabassum alleged that this has caused her "emotional distress" and it "promotes hatred". She also alleged that BJP often "drags family members of politicians into debates despite their lack of involvement in politics". *—Salar News*

Tabassum Rao *PHOTO: ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

Wangchuk to sit on indefinite fast as demands not met

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk said he and other protesters from Ladakh would sit on an indefinite fast from Saturday since they have not received any response from the government. Wangchuk was leading the 'Delhi Chalo Padyatra', which began from Leh a month ago. The 'padyatra' was organised by the Leh Apex Body, which along with the Kargil Democratic Alliance, has been spearheading an agitation for the last four years for statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. They had written to President, Prime Minister and Home Minister seeking an appointment and were assured that they would be informed about the meeting by Friday 5pm. —*PTI*

TVK is not just a namesake party: Vijay to cadres

NEW DELHI 4 OCT

Following the 'Pandakkal Pooja' ceremony that was held on Friday morning at Vikravandi Salai, ahead of Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam's (TVK's) first State conference to be held on 27 October, actor turned politician Vijay wrote a letter to his cadres. Pandakkal Pooja is a ceremony where a bamboo pole was erected at V Salai, where TVK's conference is to be held. TVK General Secretary N Anand and several other party supporters participated in the ceremony. Taking to social media X, Vijay in his letter responded to various criticisms of his party and said that the conference would be a reply to all the criticism directed at his party which will make then understand that Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam is not just a namesake political party. Further, in his letter, Vijay wrote, "We have to work for the people of Tamil Nadu. We have to fulfil their basic needs, which are not fulfilled yet," he said. —*ANI*

Landmine blast near LoC, 2 Army personnel injured

SRINAGAR, 4 OCT

Two Army personnel were injured in a landmine blast near the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district on Friday, officials said. "In the wee hours, during patrolling at Googaldara near LoC in Trehgam area of the north Kashmir district, two army personnel got injured in a landmine blast," the officials said. The two personnel have been admitted to the army hospital in Drugmulla and their condition is stable. —*PTI*

WB BJP leader Arjun's office, residence attacked

KOLKATA, 4 OCT

Former Lok Sabha MP and BJP leader Arjun Singh alleged that a group of people threw stones, hurled bombs and fired multiple gunshots at his office-cum-residence Meghna More in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas around 8.30am on Friday. Singh claimed that he sustained a splinter wound during the incident. In a tweet accompanied by a video, Singh said, "This morning, while everyone was occupied with Navratri Puja, several jihadis and goons, under the protection of Namit Singh—an accused in NIA cases and son of a local @AITCofficial Councillor—attacked my office-cum-residence, Mazdoor Bhawan, with the local police looking on." He claimed that police were mere spectators as the assailants brandished firearms openly. "Around 15 bombs were thrown, and more than a dozen rounds were fired by these people," he said. An officer from Jagatdal police station said there were no confirmed injuries. —*PTI*

It's COCAINE Cong vs NDA's WAR recruitments

Cong's involvement in drug bust dangerous: Amit Shah

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said the "involvement" of a prominent Congress leader in the Rs 5,600 crore drug bust in north India is "extremely dangerous and shameful".

Shah also said that everyone has seen the plight of the youth of Punjab, Haryana and the entire north India due to drugs during the Congress rule.

Congress has now become a party of leaders dealing in "cocaine", BJP alleged on Friday as it intensified attack on the opposition party over Tushar Goyal's arrest in a case of seizure of banned drugs worth Rs 5,600 crore.

Addressing a press conference at BJP headquarters here, party national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia also rejected the Congress youth wing's claim that Goyal had been expelled on October 17, 2022 for anti-party activities.

Bhatia alleged that the quantity of the drug haul seized by the police shows that the sole objective was to push the "youth of Haryana and the country" into drug addiction and sought to know Goyal's associates in the Congress.

Amit Shah PHOTO: PTI

"Rahul Gandhi should give a clarification. People are saying the confused and corrupt Congress is now cocaine Congress," he added.

Delhi Police has made one of the biggest ever drug busts in the city, seizing over 560 kilograms of cocaine and 40 kilograms of hydroponic marijuana estimated to be worth around Rs 5,620 crore, officials said on Wednesday. —*PTI*

NDA facilitating Indians in war torn West Asia: Kharge

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday alleged that the Modi government's skill development cooperation is facilitating the recruitment of about 15,000 Indian workers in Israel in the West Asia war.

He claimed that earlier youth from the country were duped by dubious agents for going to the Russia-Ukraine war and many lost their lives too.

"It speaks volumes about the Joblessness induced by the anti-youth policies of the Modi Government," he said in a post on X.

"The fact that young unskilled, semi-skilled and educated youth are willing to risk their lives and serve in war-ridden theatres, at reportedly high salaries, tells you that PM @narendramodi's lofty claims on Jobs are nothing but Fake Retorts to hide his own failures!

Mallikarjun Kharge PHOTO: PTI

"Youth of Haryana who are forced to seek jobs in these conflict zones will teach a befitting lesson to the BJP, tomorrow," Kharge said in his post.

"None less than Modi Government's National Skill Development Cooperation is facilitating the recruitment of about 15,000 Indian workers in Israel, amidst the war in West Asia," he alleged.

The Congress chief's comments came a day ahead of the Haryana Assembly elections, where his party is seeking to wrest power back from the BJP after a gap of ten years. —*PTI*

INDIA ON GROWTH PATH

W Asia conflict: PM says region vital for energy security

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday made oblique reference to the widening conflicts in the West Asia and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, saying the two regions were crucial for the global economy and energy security.

His comments came amid fears of further escalation of conflict in the West Asia if Israel were to retaliate and attack Iran, potentially its nuclear and oil facilities. This, analysts fear, could fuel a surge in energy prices and draw the region into a wider conflict.

Speaking at the 3rd edition of Kautilya Economic Conclave here, Modi committed to continuing structural reforms to help India become a developed nation by 2047.

"This conclave is happening at a time when the two big regions of the world are close to war-like situations. These two big regions are crucial for the global economy as well as energy security," he said without naming any country.

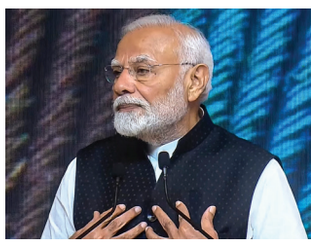


PHOTO: PTI

India is more than 85 per cent dependent on the import of crude oil, which is converted into fuels such as petrol and diesel, and about half of its gas needs.

A bulk of these come from West Asia, and in scenarios of Israel-Iran getting into prolonged conflict, the supplies could be impacted. —*PTI*

Maharashtra farmers to get extra ₹2,000cr ahead of elections

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will release Rs 20,000 crore as the 18th instalment of the PM-KISAN scheme on Saturday, benefiting over 9.4 crore farmers across the country. Disbursements will be through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). Maharashtra farmers will receive an additional Rs 2,000 crore under State's Namo Shetkari Mahasanman Nidhi Yojana. With the 18th instalment, the total amount disbursed under PM-KISAN will exceed Rs 3.45 lakh crore, supporting more than 11 crore farmers. The PM-KISAN scheme, launched in 2019, provides Rs 6,000 annually to landholding farmers in three instalments. Modi will also launch an indigenous sex-sorted semen production technology, aimed at reducing costs by approximately Rs 200 per dose. —*PTI*

Sharad Pawar urges Centre to remove 50% cap on quota

SANGLI, 4 OCT

NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar urged the BJP-led Centre on Friday to bring a constitutional amendment to increase reservation in education and government jobs beyond the existing cap of 50 per cent.

However, Shiv Sena questioned why Pawar was raising the issue just before Maharashtra elections and demanded to know what he had done to get the matter resolved during his stints as the chief minister.

Speaking to reporters, Pawar said that while granting reservation to Marathas, who have been agitating for quota, care should be taken to ensure that such limits meant for other communities are not disturbed.

"Currently, the cap on reservation is 50 per cent. But if Tamil Nadu can have 78 per cent (quota for various communities), why can't Maharashtra have 75 per cent reservation," he asked.

The Centre should take the lead and bring a constitutional amendment to raise the quota cap. "We will support the amendment," he said.

Sharad Pawar PHOTO: PTI

Pawar said the seat-sharing talks among the leaders of the opposition bloc Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) will continue next week. "I would only advise the leaders to conclude the talks as early as possible so that we can go to the people, who are looking for a change," he said. MVA partners NCP (SP), Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) and Congress fought the recent Lok Sabha polls as one unit and performed impressively, winning 30 of the 48 seats in the state. The Maharashtra assembly polls are due in November. —*PTI*

AIMIM seeks alliance with MVA in 28 seats

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) has approached Congress and NCP (SP) seeking an alliance with the Maha Vikas Aghadi to contest in 28 Muslim-dominated constituencies in the upcoming Maharashtra polls, said former MP and party leader Imtiaz Jaleel. We have told them (Congress and NCP (SP)) that if too many candidates are in the fray, then the BJP will benefit from it."

Baseless rumours: NC on alliance with BJP in J&K

SRINAGAR, 4 OCT

National Conference (NC) on Friday said it was not in touch with any political party other than INDIA bloc constituents for government formation in Jammu and Kashmir.

The party's clarification came amid speculation that it was engaged in backchannel deliberations with the BJP for government formation in the Union territory.

A post on X by former Srinagar mayor Junaid Azim Mattu late on Thursday night claiming that "NC-BJP negotiations have clearly commenced" fanned the speculation.

"NC leadership is now speaking to authorised representatives from the BJP and an unofficial mediator is "mediating". Initial groundwork includes the creation of a "larger interest" figleaf to justify the betrayal in Kashmir," Mattu said.

"Which BJP representative did Dr Farooq Abdullah meet at Pahalgam not once but twice? What negotiations are being held in Pahalgam? What happened to all the stentorian rhetoric of BJP being forbidden and prohibited? The more that things change, the more they remain the same," he added.

The NC urged the public "who have placed their trust in us" to disregard these false claims and not be swayed by rumour-mongering.

The Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections were held in three phases on 18 September, 25 September and 1 October. The counting of votes will take place on 8 October. —*PTI*

US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and Union Minister of Commerce Industry Piyush Goyal, in Washington, on Friday PHOTO: PTI

India, US sign MoU to reduce dependence on China

WASHINGTON, 4 OCT

India and the United States on Thursday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to expand and diversify the critical minerals supply chain, with an aim to reduce dependence on China, during a bilateral commercial dialogue in Washington DC.

Goyal said that India will continue to engage with the US on proposed social security or totalisation pact and it will take time.

The proposed agreement seeks to do away with the requirement for an expatriate in either country to pay for social security schemes of the host country.

He added that when the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government came to power in 2014, the country held discussions with the US on the matter.

He noted that the President Joe Biden administration has sent some "very" detailed questionnaire to India about the social security systems in India, which have all been responded to.

When asked about allegations of certain quarters that India has high customs duties, Goyal said that every country protects certain goods based on its national interests.

Citing an example, he said, the US has 163 per cent duty on peanut butter because it is a defensive protection to their farmers.

Similarly, India has zero duty on certain goods, it has low duties on a number of items and "certain goods have higher duties", he added. —*PTI*

MOVING ON

AAP National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal with his wife and parents while leaving the Chief Minister's residence days after resigning the post, in New Delhi, on Friday. He moved to a bungalow in the Lutyens' zone, Ferozeshah Road near Mandi House. The bungalow is allotted to AAP's Rajya Sabha MP from Punjab Ashok Mittal PHOTO: PTI

VOTING FOR 90 SEATS TODAY

BJP eyes hat-trick, Congress a comeback in Haryana

CHANDIGARH, 4 OCT

The fate of Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Vinesh Phogat of the Congress besides JJP's Dushyant Chautala and 1027 other candidates will be decided on Saturday as elections to the 90-member Haryana assembly will be held with over 2 crore people eligible to vote.

The ruling BJP is eyeing a hat-trick of wins in the state while the Congress is hoping to make a comeback after a decade. Counting of votes will be held on October 8.

Haryana's Chief Electoral Officer Pankaj Agarwal said 2,03,54,350 voters, including 8,821 centurions, are eligible to exercise their franchise and the voting will be held from 7 am to 6 pm.

Polling officials with EVM and other election material before Haryana Assembly elections, on Friday PHOTO: PTI

A total of 1,031 candidates are contesting in all 90 assembly constituencies, including 101 women. Among these candidates, 464 are contesting as independent.

A total of 20,632 polling booths have been set up for voting, Agarwal said on Friday.

The key contesting parties in the fray are BJP, Congress, AAP, INLD-BSP and JJP-Azad Samaj Party.

Most seats are likely to see a direct fight between BJP and Congress.

People will break 'chakravyuh' of PM's 'crony capitalist' policies: Rahul

Alleging that BJP has "failed" the economy in Haryana, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Friday said the people of the state will soon strike the next blow to break the 'chakravyuh' of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "crony capitalist policies".

He also alleged that the "disease of unemployment" spread by the BJP has put the future of the state's youth in "deep danger" and a Congress government will ensure that employment returns and every family is prosperous.

Gandhi shared on X a video of his interaction with a group of women during his recent Vijay Sankalp Yatra.

We did not know Tanwar was so fickle-minded. He campaigned for BJP throughout the day and switched to Congress in the evening
-Syed Shahnawaz Hussain, BJP spokesperson

Along with the video, he said in his post in Hindi on X, "The disease of unemployment spread by BJP has put the roots of Haryana, the future of the youth and the security of the state in deep danger." —*PTI*

Lone NCP MLA in J'khand joins BJP ahead of polls

RANCHI, 4 OCT

Jharkhand's sole Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) legislator Kamlesh Singh joined the BJP on Friday ahead of the upcoming state assembly elections.

Hussainabad MLA, who withdrew his support from the Hemant Soren-led government on November 1 last year, asserted that he would strengthen the party in Palamu.

He was welcomed into the saffron party by Jharkhand BJP president Babulal Marandi during a ceremony at the party's headquarters.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is the BJP's election co-in-charge for Jharkhand, also attended the event.

Following the political turmoil within the NCP in Maharashtra, Singh aligned himself with Ajit Pawar-led faction. —*PTI*

T'gana woman burnt to death on witchcraft suspicion

HYDERABAD, 4 OCT

A 45-year-old woman was allegedly burnt to death by a group of people on suspicion of practising black-magic in a village in Medak district of Telangana, police said on Friday. The incident happened in Katriyal village of Ramayampet mandal on Thursday night when at least six people attacked the woman at her house and set her ablaze. A senior police official said after getting information that a woman had been beaten up and set on fire, a police team immediately reached the village and shifted the injured woman to a hospital where she died while undergoing treatment. The group, who accused the woman parctising black magic on one of their family members, argued with her and later attacked her, police said, based on a preliminary investigation. A murder case was registered, and the accused were identified, police said. Further investigation is on.—*PTI*

Zee: Certificate can be issued for 'Emergency'

MUMBAI, 4 OCT

Zee Entertainment Enterprises, co-producer of Kangana Ranaut's 'Emergency' film, on Friday told the Bombay High Court it has agreed to the cuts suggested by the censor board. Senior counsel Sharan Jagtiani, who represented Zee, said the necessary cuts would be made and the film would be submitted to the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) for issuance of its certificate. A division bench of Justices BP Colabawalla and Firdosh Pooniwalla accepted the statements and disposed of the petition filed by Zee Entertainment. The movie, initially slated for a September 6 release, has been embroiled in a battle with the censor board for non-issuance of the CBFC certificate.Last week, the CBFC told HC that the movie could be released if certain cuts were made as decided. —*PTI*

AI flight returns to bay in T'puram after smoke alert

T'PURAM, 4 OCT

An Air India Express flight returned to the bay at Thiruvananthapuram Airport after suspected smoke was observed during the take-off initiation on Friday morning, sources from the airline and the airport said. The incident was reported at around 10.30 am on the flight bound for Muscat. There were 142 passengers onboard the aircraft, and they were offloaded for inspection, an airport source said. An Air India Express spokesperson said that an alternative aircraft has been arranged for the onward journey of its "guests." An investigation will be conducted to determine the exact nature of the issue, he said. "We regret the inconvenience while prioritising safety in every aspect of our operations," he added in a statement. —*PTI*

UP: 120 fall ill after consuming toxic buckwheat flour

BIJNOR, 4 OCT

More than 120 people from different villages in Chandpur area here were hospitalised following complaints of vomiting, anxiety and fever due to suspected food poisoning, officials said on Friday. The affected people were rushed to different hospitals on Thursday evening after they consumed items made of buckwheat flour (kuttu atta) on the first day of Navratri. The district administration has launched an investigation into the matter. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Koshalendra Singh said the cases were reported from Raunia, Bagadpur, Mahmoodpur, Syau and Mansoorpur villages in the Chandpur area. District Magistrate Ankit Kumar Agrawal told reporters, "Around 125-150 people are estimated to have fallen ill. —*PTI*

SC warns Gujarat officials over demolition

SC tells Gujarat authorities it will ask them to restore properties & send them to jail

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

Supreme Court on Friday said if it finds that authorities in Gujarat acted in contempt of its order on demolition of properties, it will ask them to restore the structures.

A bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan was hearing a plea seeking initiation of contempt proceedings for alleged violation of the apex court's 17 September order which had said that there shall be no demolition of properties, including those accused of crimes, across country without its permission.

In its order last month, the SC had said, "We further clarify that our order would not be applicable if there is an unauthorised structure in any public place such as road, street, footpath, abutting railway line or any river body or water bodies and also, to cases where there is an order for demolition made by a court of law".

During the hearing on Friday, bench observed, "If we find that they are in contempt of our order, not only we will be sending them to jail but we will ask them to restore all this." —*PTI*

SC upholds validity of 90L IT review notices

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

In a relief to the Income Tax Department, Supreme Court has upheld the validity of nearly 90,000 reassessment notices issued by the revenue department after 1 April, 2021, under old provisions.

The bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra dealt with two legal questions related to the interplay of three Parliamentary statutes, the Income Tax Act, the TOLA and the Finance Act.

The CJI, writing the 112-page judgement, held, "We conclude that: a. After 1 April, 2021, the Income Tax Act has to be read along with the substituted provisions and TOLA will continue to apply to the Income Tax Act after 1 April, 2021 if any action or proceeding specified under the substituted provisions of the Income Tax Act falls for completion between 20 March, 2020 and 31 March, 2021."

Supreme Court PHOTO: PTI

The bench held that the provision of TOLA "overrides Section 149 of the Income Tax Act only to the extent of relaxing the time limit for issuance of a reassessment notice under Section 148 IT Act".

Over 9,000 pleas were filed in different high courts challenging the re-assessment notices and several judgements were passed in favour of the taxpayers leading the revenue department to move to the apex court. —*PTI*

SC QUESTIONS DELHI LG'S 'HURRY' IN HOLDING MCD POLLS

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

Office to exercise executive powers for holding the election for the sixth member of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi's Standing Committee.

A bench of Justices PS Narasimha and R Mahadevan asked the LG's office to not hold elections for the post of chairman of the Standing Committee till it hears the plea of Mayor Shelly Oberoi against the 27 September Standing Committee polls.

"We will view it seriously if you hold an election for the MCD Standing Committee chairman," the bench told senior advocate Sanjay Jain, appearing for the LG's office.

It said that initially it was not inclined to entertain this petition but had to issue notice because of Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena's decision to exercise his powers. —*PTI*

SC asks Assam panel to make surprise visits at Matia transit camp

Supreme Court directed Assam State Legal Services Authority to conduct surprise visits at Matia transit camp for foreigners to check the facility's hygiene and food quality etc. A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih asked the secretary of State Legal Services Authority to nominate appropriate officers to make visits to the camp without prior notice to the authorities for the purpose of verifying cleanliness. The top court directed the state legal services authority to file a report after inspection within one month from today. The matter has been posted for hearing on 4 November.

SC: Will lay down law on HC revoking orders in open courts

Supreme Court said it will lay down the law on the issue of High Courts revoking orders dictated in open courts after the top court came across a case in which the Madras HC quashed a money laundering case against a former IPS officer and later modified its direction and reheard the matter. A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih stayed the proceedings in a money laundering case against former IPS officer M S Jaffer Sait registered in connection with an alleged illegal allotment of a Tamil Nadu Housing Board plot.

Woman raped by 3 in Pune, her male friend assaulted

PUNE, 4 OCT

A 21-year-old woman was allegedly raped by three unidentified persons, who also tied her male friend to a tree and assaulted him at an isolated place on the outskirts of Pune city, police said on Friday.

The horrific incident took place in the Bopdev Ghar area at around 11 pm on Thursday and a day later police released sketches of two of the suspects as they intensified efforts to trace the culprits and sought help of citizens to nab them.

According to the Kondhwa police, under whose jurisdiction the crime occurred, the woman had gone to the locality with a male friend.

He said the trio first tied the woman's male friend to a tree at the crime scene and then took turns to rape her.

The police came to know about the incident at around 5 am on Friday after the woman along with her male friend approached Maharashtra government-run Sassoon General Hospital in Pune city, said Sharma.

Meanwhile, the police sent a forensic team to the crime spot and deployed a dog squad as part of investigation to gather clues and trace the accused. The police have provided three mobile phone numbers -- 8691999689, 8275200947, 9307545045 -- and appealed to citizens to contact them with any leads. —*PTI*

AP man held for assaulting school girls

Arunachal Pradesh Police have arrested a headmaster of a government school in Arunachal Pradesh's Changlang district for allegedly sexually harassing minor students of the school, an official said. Reportedly, the accused allegedly sent messages with objectionable content to victim's mobile phones.

CHILD BEGGAR TO DOCTOR

Dr Pinki Haryan with Therchin Gyaltsen, Director of Tong-Len Charitable Trust. As a child, Haryan, along with her parents, begged on the streets and scavenged for food in garbage dumps in Mcleodganj, Himachal Pradesh. 20 years and a Chinese medical degree later, Haryan is a qualified doctor raring to serve the destitute PHOTO: PTI

Dance master Jani gets interim bail in 'sexual assault' case

HYDERABAD, 4 OCT

A city court has granted interim bail to cinema choreographer Jani Master, who was arrested last month for allegedly sexually assaulting a woman who worked with him.

The court on Thursday granted interim bail to Jani Master, whose real name is Shaik Jani Basha, from 6 October to 10 October, after he filed the bail application to attend the National Film Awards ceremony, scheduled in Delhi next week.

Jani Master was apprehended in Goa by the Cyberabad police on September 19 and brought to Hyderabad and produced before a city court which had remanded him to 14-day judicial custody.

The woman, who worked as Jani Master's assistant choreographer, in a complaint with the police, had alleged that Jani Master had sexually assaulted her in 2020 during a work trip to Mumbai and continued sexual harassment and also threatened her not to disclose it to anyone.

As per the victim's statement, the accused committed sexual assault on her multiple times from 2020 at various places--different shooting spots and locations, including the victim's house and harassed her demanding sexual favours besides allegedly, forced her to marry him. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

A damaged truck after a collision with a tractor trolley, killing 10 people, in Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh on Friday PHOTO: PTI

UP accident kills 10; ₹2L ex-gratia announced

MIRZAPUR, 4 OCT

Ten people were killed and three injured when a truck collided with a tractor trolley carrying labourers in the district early Friday, police said.

The incident took place around 1 am on GT Road between Kachhawan and Mirzamurad areas on the Mirzapur-Varanasi border, Superintendent of Police (Mirzapur) Abhinandan said.

"The tractor trolley, carrying 13 labourers who were returning from construction work in Bhadohi district, was hit from behind by the truck that had gone out of the driver's control," the SP said.

"Of the 13 injured, 10 died while the three others were taken to the hospital at the IIT-BHU, where their condition is stated to be normal," the officer said.

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath condoled the loss of lives in the accident.

Prime Minister Modi also announced a compensation of Rs 2 lakh to each for the kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 to those injured.

Adityanath also announced a similar compensation for the kin of the deceased. —*PTI*

AMETHI FAMILY MURDER

Killer must go same way as my son was shot: Father of victim

AMETHI, 4 OCT

The killer must meet the same fate as my family, an anguished Ram Gopal said on Friday after his son, daughter-in-law and two daughters aged six and one were gunned down by an unknown assailant.

The brazen wipeout of the Dalit family at their rented home in Ahorwa Bhawani area has drawn widespread denunciation of the state government.

Sunil Kumar, 35, a government school teacher, his 32-year-old wife Poonam, and the couple's two daughters, Drishti and Suni were shot dead Thursday evening.

PHOTO: PTI

"If anything happens to me or my family, Verma should be held responsible for it," she had written in the complaint, Amethi Superintendent of Police Anoop Kumar Singh said Thursday.

"The way my son has gone, they (killers) should go the same way," Ram Gopal, whose son was the sole breadwinner of the family, said on Friday.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday spoke on the phone to the man whose son, daughter-in-law, and two granddaughters were shot dead by an unknown assailant in nearby Amethi.

Opposition leaders in Uttar Pradesh attacked the BJP-led state government over law and order situation. "The incident of the brutal murder of four members of a Dalit family in Amethi district of UP is extremely sad and worrying. The government should also take strict action against the culprits and the policemen there so that the criminals do

'1st murder of 2024': Teen boasts of Delhi doc killing

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

Police have apprehended one juvenile in connection with the murder of Unani practitioner Dr Javed Akhtar, police said.

Efforts are currently underway to apprehend the second suspect involved in the crime, police added.

The police were able to apprehend the accused after they obtained clues about one of the suspects from his Instagram account.

"The police obtained clues about one of the suspects from his Instagram account. After the murder, he posted a story in which he was holding a pistol and claimed to have committed the first murder of 2024," police said.

"Southern Range Crime Branch has apprehended one juvenile in connection with the murder of Dr Javed Akhtar. The apprehended juvenile admitted his involvement in the crime. Efforts are ongoing to apprehend the co-accused. A team has been dispatched for further investigation," an official from Crime Branch said.

"During the investigation, the police discovered that two boys, aged between 16 and 17 years, arrived at the clinic at 1 am on 2 October to change the dressing they had received the day before," police said.

Doctor Javed Akhtar was shot dead inside Nima Hospital, Jaitpur under the Kalindi Kunj area. As per hospital staff, two boys had come to the hospital with an injury, after dressing they had demanded to meet the doctor and shot him dead. —*PTI*

BEFORE ENVIRONMENT CLEARANCE

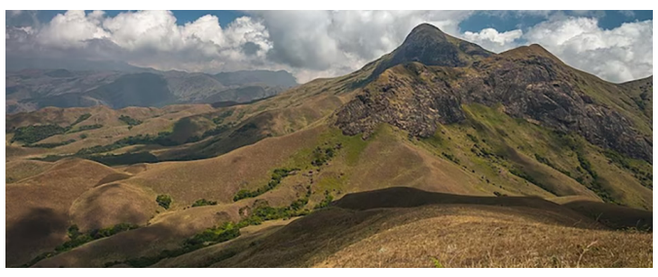
'Western Ghats projects need site visits'

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

A panel of the Union Environment Ministry has said that site visits should be conducted "in toto" before granting environmental clearances to pumped storage projects (PSPs) in the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats.

During a meeting of the ministry's Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) on 27 September, the member secretary stated that the ministry had granted Terms of Reference (ToR) -- which outlines the environmental studies a project must complete before applying for clearance -- to approximately 15 projects in the Western Ghats.

The Western Ghats, like the Himalayas, are among the most fragile regions in the country and are prone to illegal mining, unregulated construction, and uncontrolled commercial activities.



Western Ghats, like the Himalayas, are among the most fragile regions in the country and are prone to illegal mining PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

In 2010, the Centre formed the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel under ecologist Madhav Gadgil to study the impact of population pressure, climate change, and development activities on the Western Ghats.

The panel recommended in 2011 that the entire hill range be declared an Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) and divided into three Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZ 1, 2, and 3) based on their environmental sensitivity. It also recommended a ban on mining, quarrying, new thermal power plants, hydropower projects, and large-scale wind energy projects in ESZ 1.

However, these recommendations faced opposition from state governments, industries, and local communities.

UNESCO declared the Western Ghats a World Heritage Site in July 2012 and in 2013, the Centre formed a High-Level Working Group led by rocket scientist K Kasturirangan to propose measures for the ecological protection and sustainable development. —*PTI*

Prohibitory orders in Gwalior ahead of India-B'desh match

GWALIOR, 4 OCT

Days before a T20I cricket match between India and Bangladesh in Gwalior, the district magistrate has clamped prohibitory orders, banning protests and circulation of inflammatory material, especially on social media, to maintain peace, officials have said. More than 2,500 police personnel have been deployed.

The orders will be in force till 7 October and come in the wake of a 'Gwalior bandh' call given by the Hindu Mahasabha on the match day (6 Oct) and protests by organisations.

As per the orders, any person within the limits of district will face action if he or she via social media platforms disrupts the international

PHOTO: PTI

match or incites religious sentiments. Banners, posters, cutouts, flags and other things with objectionable or inflammatory language and messages stand banned.

Demonstrations and effigy burning, among other things, at private or public places will not be allowed during the period, according to the administration. The India-Bangladesh clash will take place at the Madhavrao Scindia Cricket Stadium in Gwalior. —*PTI*

FESTIVE MODE

Artists adorning traditional costumes illuminated with lights perform during the final rehearsals for Garba on the eve of the Navratri festival, in Ahmedabad
PHOTO: ANI

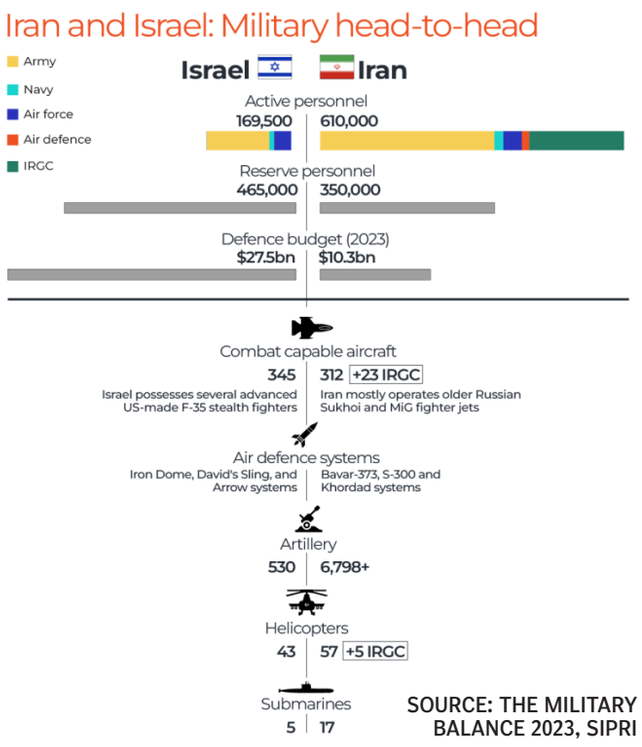
What are Iran, Israel's defence capabilities?

Iran attacked Israel's major cities with at least 180 ballistic missiles on Tuesday.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said the missiles were fired as Tehran's response to the killings of civilians in Gaza and more recently, in Lebanon, in Israeli attacks – as well as the assassinations of leaders of the IRGC, Hamas and Hezbollah.

The IRGC said the missiles were specifically aimed at three military bases in Tel Aviv. Iranian state media said that the country used Fatah hypersonic ballistic missiles for the first time, a claim Al Jazeera was unable to independently verify.

As Israel and Iran — longtime foes who for decades have engaged in proxy battles — increasingly head towards a direct confrontation, we take a look at their respective military capabilities, their abilities to attack each other, and how they might defend their territories.



Number of soldiers

According to The Military Balance 2023, published by the United Kingdom-based think tank the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS):

Iran has 6,10,000 active personnel, including 3,50,000 in the army, 190,000 in the IRGC, 18,000 in the navy, 37,000 in the air force and 15,000 in air defence. Iran additionally has a reserve army of 3,50,000. Conscription is mandatory for Iranian men over 18, with a few exemptions.

Israel has 1,69,500 active personnel, including 1,26,000 in the army, 9,500 in the navy and 34,000 in the air force. Israel has a reserve army of 4,65,000. Israel mandates conscription of most young men and women over 18, with certain exemptions.

Military spending

According to a fact sheet published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in April 2024:

Iran spent USD 10.3 billion in 2023, a 0.6 percent increase from 2022.

Israel spent USD 27.5 billion in 2023, a 24 percent increase from 2022 — a surge in part fuelled by the war on Gaza following 7 October.

Ground forces

According to The Military Balance 2023:

Iran has over 10,513 battle tanks, more than 6,798 artillery guns and more than 640 armoured personal carriers. The army also has 50 helicopters while the IRGC has 5 helicopters.

Israel has around 400 battle tanks, 530 artillery guns and more than 1,190 personal carriers.

Navy

According to The Military Balance 2023:

Iran has 17 tactical submarines, 68 patrols and coastal combatants, seven corvettes, 12 landing ships, 11 landing craft, 18 logistics and support equipment.

Israel has five submarines and 49 patrol and coastal combatants. Air defence systems

According to The Military Balance 2023: Israel's air defence relies on what is known as the Iron Dome system, which is believed to have intercepted most of Iran's missiles on Tuesday night. The system is equipped with a radar that detects an incoming projectile, its speed and its direction. The control centre then calculates whether the projectile poses a threat to Israeli towns. The projectiles that do not pose a threat are allowed to land in empty fields. If they pose a threat, the missile-firing unit launches missiles to shoot them down. The launcher contains 20 interceptor missiles.

There are 10 Iron Dome batteries scattered around Israel. Other systems intercept medium and long-range missiles. The David's Sling intercepts missiles ranging between 40km (25 miles) and 300km (186 miles).

The Arrow System intercepts missiles with a range of up to 2,400km (1,491 miles).

Iran: In February, Iran deployed the short-range, low-altitude Azarakhsh, which means "thunderbolt" in Persian. It is an infrared detection system, equipped with radar and electro-optic systems to detect and intercept targets. It can be mounted on vehicles.

Iran has a range of different surface-to-air missile defence systems. These include the over 42 long-range Russian-manufactured S-200s, S-300s and local Bavar-373; the over 59 medium-range US MIM-23 Hawk, HQ-2J and Khordad-15; and the 279 short-range Chinese-manufactured CH-SA-4 and 9K331 Tor-M1.

Ballistic missiles

According to the Missile Defense Project of the US-based think tank the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS):

Iran has at least 12 different types of medium-range and short-range ballistic missiles in its arsenal. These range from the Tondar 69, which has a range of 150km to the Khorramshahr and Sejjil, which both range up to 2,000km,

Israel has at least four different types of small, medium and intermediate-range ballistic missiles, ranging from the LORA with a range of 280km to the Jericho-3 with a range between 4,800km and 6,500km.

Nuclear capabilities

Israel is estimated to have 90 nuclear warheads in its stockpile, according to the US-based Arms Control Association.

Iran is not believed to have nuclear weapons, but it has an advanced nuclear programme and operates several nuclear facilities and research centres.

Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei banned the production of weapons in a religious edict or fatwa in the early 2000s, saying it is forbidden in Islam. However, in May, Iran did threaten to change its nuclear doctrine "should Iran's existence be threatened".

—Courtesy, Al Jazeera

SALAR

Is it bad to listen to music all the time? Yes and no

Music surrounds us. It can be a companion throughout the day – listening on the way to school or work, checking out a favourite artist with friends, hearing it live at concerts and sporting events, enjoying or enduring it in stores and restaurants, and then listening again in the evening to unwind.

As meaningful and uplifting as music can be, it might also help you while studying, working on school projects and doing homework. As a clinical assistant professor of audiology, I can tell you the research shows that music can increase your focus and even motivate you.

This connection depends somewhat on the individual. Some people need silence while doing homework. Human brains are limited in their ability to multitask, and some people are better at doing two things at once compared with others.

The style of music, the activity you're doing and the effort it takes to complete the work also matter.

Some types of music work better than others

Numerous studies have discovered how music can affect study and work habits:

Listening to instrumental or familiar music in the background competes less with a study assignment than music with lyrics or unfamiliar music. Instrumental music also seems to interfere less with reading comprehension and assignments requiring verbal and visual memory than does music with lyrics.

One study showed soft, fast music had a positive impact on learning, but loud and fast, loud and slow, and soft and slow hindered learning.

Upbeat music with a higher tempo may help when you're doing something requiring movement or motivation, such as exercising or cleaning your room.

The more difficult your task is – for instance, memorizing material, problem-solving or learning something new – the more likely the music is distracting and people often need to turn it off.

But before listening to your favourite sounds while studying, don't miss an important detail: the volume.

The damage begins early

Whether listening through speakers, headphones or earbuds, too high a volume can damage your hearing. It's known as noise-induced hearing loss, and it happens more often than you might think – those high-volume sounds can destroy tiny, delicate hair-like structures in the inner ear that help you hear.

Inner-ear damage can occur from a single exposure to an extremely loud sound or from repeated exposure to loud sounds over months or years. While some parts of the ear can repair themselves, the inner ear cannot fix itself.

Close to 1 in 5 Americans ages 12 to 19 – about 17 per cent – demonstrate signs of noise-induced hearing changes in one or both ears, which could eventually lead to hearing loss.

Volume, time, distance

How dangerous a sound is to your hearing depends on three things: the volume of the sound, the length of time you listen, and how close you are to the sound.

Sounds are measured in decibels, or dB, and the dBA scale reflects how the human ear hears sound.

Typically, sounds at or below 70 decibels are safe for listening. Conversations generally register at about 60 dBA, city traffic at about 80 dBA.

Sounds that may be harmful include lawn mowers, at roughly 95 dBA, rock concerts, at around 120 dBA, and fireworks, at about 140 dBA.

The World Health Organisation suggests a sound allowance for weekly exposure, based on loudness. For example, you could listen to a 75 dBA sound for 40 hours per week. But listen to something at 89 dBA and that time allowance is drastically reduced, to about an hour and a half.

Signs you've been exposed to a dangerously loud sound include muffled hearing, ringing in the ears and difficulty having a conversation from 3 feet (1 meter) away.

Although your hearing generally returns to normal after such an experience, there is a cost.

This temporary shift in hearing could lead to permanent harm to inner-ear structures and ultimately damage your hearing.

How to stay safe?

Technology not available even a few years ago can now alert you of a risky listening environment.

A sound-level meter app measures the sound around you to determine whether it's too loud. So can some smartwatches.

If listening through speakers, the sound-level app can warn you if your tunes are creeping toward too loud. When wearing headphones or earbuds, keep it at or below 60 per cent of the volume allowed by your device. One rule of thumb: If someone else can hear the sound emanating from your headphones or earbuds when they are an arm's length away from you, the volume is too loud.

Use high-quality, noise-cancelling headphones or earbuds to hear the audio at a safer, lower level.

Some headphones also have volume limitations.

—Courtesy, The Conversation

When wearing headphones or earbuds, keep music at or below 60 per cent of the volume allowed by your device
PHOTO: PIXABAY

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

What a hilsa ban reveals about India-Bangladesh tensions

Hilsa is Bangladesh's national fish. Locally known as ilish, it is cherished as the queen among fish and forms part of the culinary identity of both Bangladesh and the bordering West Bengal.

Former Bangladeshi prime minister Sheikh Hasina used the fish – which is found in the Bay of Bengal and in rivers – as a tool of diplomacy to foster ties with its western neighbour, India.

But Bangladesh's interim government's decision to briefly ban exports of the fish to India in September caused a culinary crisis of sorts ahead of the festival of Durga Pooja. Hilsa fish cooked in mustard sauce is a popular delicacy during the festival. Some experts viewed the move as a diplomatic rebuke for New Delhi's backing of Hasina, who has taken shelter in India after her removal in late August.

Dhaka insisted the ban aimed to reduce the cost of the freshwater fish domestically amid a leaner harvest this year. It, however, reversed its order within two weeks.

So, what is the fish at the centre of it all, and is it more than just a popular meal?

What is hilsa?

Bangladesh exports 70 per cent of the world's hilsa. But the prized catch is increasingly becoming rare and expensive, owing to overfishing, increased demand and environmental challenges like climate change.

Fishermen this year say they are also struggling to catch adequate amounts of hilsa due to rough sea conditions.

The exports add to the scarcity, with the fish unaffordable to most Bangladeshis due to its high cost. In 2024, the price of a 1.5kg hilsa fish reached about 1,800 Bangladeshi taka in local markets, compared with about 1,300 taka last year.

At 5,50,000 to 6,00,000 tonnes a year, hilsa contributes about 12 per cent of Bangladesh's total fish production, supporting approximately 5,00,000 fishers directly and two million people in related industries.

Some cherished staples of local cuisine include bhapa ilish (steamed hilsa), ilish polao (pilaf rice with hilsa), and shorshe ilish (hilsa in mustard sauce).

Did Bangladesh impose a ban on hilsa to India?

In September, Dhaka imposed an export ban on hilsa, specifically targeting shipments to India. This came in the run-up to the Durga Pooja festival in October when demand typically peaks across the border.

Fisheries officials explained that the ban was necessary to prioritise domestic supply and manage the declining hilsa population.

Hilsa prices have shot up sharply in India as Dhaka reduced exports by 1,000 tonnes. But the government has failed to bring down the prices in Bangladesh.

"A syndicate of fishermen who smuggled hilsa to India kept the price high," said Khandakar Tahmid Rejwan, a research data analyst at the Bangladesh Peace Observatory under the Centre for Alternatives.

An expert from India said the brief ban marked "a firm departure" from Hasina's practice of using the fish as a symbol of goodwill and friendship between Dhaka and New Delhi.

At 5,50,000 to 6,00,000 tonnes a year, hilsa contributes about 12 per cent of Bangladesh's total fish production, supporting approximately 5,00,000 fishers directly and two million people in related industries ***PHOTO: PTI***

Hasina first used the fish as a diplomatic tool when she came to power in 1996. She gifted hilsa to then-West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu ahead of a landmark agreement on sharing water, a major bilateral issue between the neighbours.

In 2016, the former Bangladeshi prime minister sent a consignment of hilsa to Mamata Banerjee, who heads the government of West Bengal bordering Bangladesh. A year later, former president Pranab Mukherjee, a prominent Bengali leader of the time, was gifted hilsa as a gesture of friendship.

But the interim government is likely to diverge from Hasina's pro-India foreign policy, according to an expert on India-Bangladesh relations.

The move by the interim government "compromises the goodwill" between the two nations, Sohini Bose, associate fellow at the Observer Research Foundation in Kolkata, told Al Jazeera via email.

Is this the first such ban?

No. Bangladesh imposed a ban on hilsa exports to India in 2012 following disputes over a water-sharing agreement. This was eventually lifted in January 2018 as a goodwill gesture.

Additionally, over the years Hasina's government frequently made exceptions to the ban by "gifting" hundreds of tonnes of the fish ahead of Durga Puja

Bangladesh also periodically imposes local bans on fishing hilsa to protect it during breeding periods.

The main ban is enforced for 22 days during October and has been a practice since 2007. This restriction during hilsa's spawning season gives it time to reproduce undisturbed.

Why are ties between India and Bangladesh strained?

India backed Hasina until the end of her 15-year rule, which rights group say was marked by human rights abuses, electoral manipulations and a crackdown on opposition parties.

New Delhi also observed silence on a government crackdown that killed more than 300 protesters, shortly before she fled Bangladesh. India's hosting of Hasina has not gone down well with the interim government, which has sought Hasina's extradition – a demand New Delhi is unlikely to honour.

Many in Bangladesh perceive New Delhi's backing of Hasina as enabling her heavy-handed approach.

In her 15-year rule, Hasina fostered close ties with India, particularly through security cooperation agreements, which critics and opposition parties said were biased in favour of New Delhi.

Vilification of Bangladeshis by India as "infiltrators" and "termites" has also angered Bangladeshis. Last week, Dhaka condemned "a highly deplorable" speech by Home Minister Amit Shah.

Addressing a rally in Jharkhand, Shah said if a BJP government was elected in the state, "We will hang every Bangladeshi infiltrator upside down to give them a lesson".

Dhaka has also complained about the killing of its citizens at the border by Border Security Force. Rights groups have slammed the "unlawful killings and abuse of Bangladeshi people at the border". The alleged rising Islamophobia and attacks against Muslims under Modi have also instilled anti-India sentiments in Bangladesh.

Moreover, the Hasina government's trade deals with Indian corporations also came under scrutiny, with critics accusing her of signing deals that benefitted Indian companies.

The Teesta River dispute also remains a major point of contention between Bangladesh and India, as both countries rely heavily on its water for agriculture.

—Courtesy, Al Jazeera

OVERNIGHT ISRAELI AIRSTRIKES ROCK BEIRUT

The strikes cut off the main border crossing between Lebanon and Syria which is a main crossing point

BEIRUT, 4 OCT

Israel carried out a series of massive airstrikes overnight in southern suburbs of Beirut and another that cut off the main border crossing between Lebanon and Syria, a main crossing point for tens of thousands of people fleeing Israeli bombardment.

The blasts in the Beirut suburbs sent huge plumes of smoke and flames into the night sky and shook buildings km away in the Lebanese capital. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported there were more than 10 consecutive airstrikes in the area.

The Israeli military said Friday that a strike in Beirut the day before killed Mohammed Rashid Skafi, the head of Hezbollah's communications division. The military said in a statement that Skafi was "a senior Hezbollah terrorist who was responsible for the communications unit since 2000" and was "closely affiliated" with high-up Hezbollah officials.

Friday's strike about 60 km to the east along the Lebanon-Syria border led to the closure of the road near the busy Masnaa Border Crossing.

Associated Press video footage showed two huge craters on each side of the road. People disembarked cars unable to pass the site of the strike, carrying bags of their possessions as they crossed on foot.

Tens of thousands of people fleeing war in Lebanon have crossed into Syria over the past two weeks there.

The airstrike came a day after an Israeli military spokesperson said Hezbollah has been trying to transport military equipment through the border crossing.

Hezbollah is believed to have received much of its weaponry from Iran via Syria. The group has a presence on both sides of the border, a region where it has been fighting alongside Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces.

The new wave of strikes came after Israel warned people to evacuate communities in southern Lebanon that are outside a United Nations-declared buffer zone, as the yearlong conflict between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah escalates.

Israel launched a ground incursion into Lebanon on Tuesday and its forces have been clashing with Hezbollah militants in a narrow strip along the border. *—PTI*

Flames rise from Israeli airstrikes in Dahiyeh, Beirut, Lebanon, on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

Will attack Israel again: Iran supreme leader

TEHRAN, 4 OCT

Iran's supreme leader on Friday praised the country's recent missile strike on Israel and said it was ready to do it again if necessary, state TV reported.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in his first appearance as leader at Friday prayers in about five years, called the missile strike a "shining" job by Iran's armed forces.

On Tuesday, Iran launched at least 180 missiles at Israel, the latest in a series of rapidly escalating attacks between Israel and Iran and its allies that threaten to push the Middle East closer to a region-wide war. Israel said it intercepted many of the missiles, and officials in Washington said US destroyers assisted in Israel's defence. Iran said most of its missiles hit their targets. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Khamenei, 80, said in a 40-minute speech to thousands of people at the Mosalla mosque, the main prayer site in Tehran, that the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel nearly a year ago on 7 October 2023, was a legitimate action by the Palestinian people.

He said Tuesday's missile barrage was based on international law, the country's law and Islamic beliefs.

He urged nations from "Afghanistan to Yemen and from Iran to Gaza and Yemen" to be ready to take action against the enemy, and praised those who had died doing so.

Khamenei gave half of the speech in Arabic as he addressed his comments to Arab nations. *—PTI*

PHOTO: AP

Sirens sound in Haifa Bay as rockets launched at N Israel

TEL AVIV, 4 OCT

A barrage of rockets was launched at northern Israel, the Israel Defence Force (IDF) said on Friday. Following the sirens that sounded between 7.01 and 7.04 in the Haifa Bay and Western Galilee areas, about 20 projectiles were identified crossing from Lebanon, the military confirmed. Most of the aerial attack was intercepted by the IAF, however, some rockets were allowed to fall in open areas. According to sources there are no casualities.

—Agencies

PLIGHT OF WAR

Amid the ongoing tensions in West Asia, Israel posted a picture on X and wrote, "Six empty chairs. grandparents Margit and Yossi, murdered on 7 October, 2023. Yarden, Shiri, Kfir and Ariel, still held hostage in Gaza." **PHOTO:X/@ISRAEL**

Libya to resume oil production at two of its major fields

CAIRO, 4 OCT

Libya's state-run oil company said Thursday it was restarting full oil production, almost two months after shutting down operations in two of its major fields amid a political crisis. The National Oil Corporation said in a statement that it would resume production at the Sharara and El-Feel oil fields, and export shipments from Es Sider, the country's largest port. In August, the company declared "force majeure", a legal manoeuvre that lets a company get out of its contracts because of extraordinary circumstances. As part of the review of the force majeure situation, NOC confirmed in its statement that it "can resume the operations of crude oil production and exporting operations to its customers". ***—PTI***

Tunisia to vote on Sunday in its third prez election

TUNIS, 4 OCT

With his major opponents imprisoned or left off the ballot, Tunisian President Kais Saied faces few obstacles to winning reelection on Sunday, five years after riding anti-establishment backlash to a first term. The North African country's 6 October presidential election is its third since protests led to the 2011 ouster of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali — the first autocrat toppled in the Arab Spring uprisings that also overthrew leaders in Egypt, Libya and Yemen. However, a raft of arrests and actions taken by a Saied-appointed election authority raised questions about whether this year's race is free and fair. ***—PTI***

Bird flu kills more than 12 tigers in Vietnam

HANOI, 4 OCT

More than a dozen tigers were incinerated after the animals contracted bird flu at a zoo in southern Vietnam, officials said. State media VNExpress cited a caretaker at Vuon Xoai zoo in Bien Hoa city saying the animals were fed with raw chicken bought from nearby farms. The panther and 20 tigers, including several cubs, weighed between 10 and 120 kilograms (20 and 265 pounds) when they died. The bodies were incinerated and buried on the premises. "The tigers died so fast. They looked weak, refused to eat and died after two days of falling sick," said zoo manager Nguyen Ba Phuc. Samples from the tigers tested positive for H5N1, the virus that causes bird flu. The virus was first identified in 1959 and grew into a widespread and highly lethal menace to migratory birds and domesticated poultry. ***—PTI***

N Korea threatens to use nuclear arms

SEOUL, 4 OCT

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un threatened to use nuclear weapons and destroy South Korea permanently if provoked, state media reported on Friday, after the South's leader warned that Kim's regime would collapse if he attempts to use nuclear arms.

The exchange of such rhetoric between the rival Koreas is nothing new, but the latest comments come during heightened animosities over the North's recent disclosure of a nuclear facility and the continuation of missile tests. Next week, observers say North Korea's rubber-stamp parliament is expected to constitutionally declare a hostile "two-state" system on the Korean Peninsula to formally reject reconciliation with South Korea and codify new national borders.

During a visit to a special operation forces unit on Wednesday, Kim said his military "would use without hesitation all the offensive forces it possesses, including nuclear weapons", if South Korea attempts to use armed forces encroaching upon the sovereignty of North Korea, according to the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

Unveiling South Korea's most powerful ballistic missile and other weapons that could target North Korea, Yoon said the day that North Korea tries to use nuclear weapons would be the end of the Kim government because Kim would face "the resolute and overwhelming response" of the South Korean-US alliance. *—PTI*

The latest comments come during heightened animosities over the North Korea's recent disclosure of a nuclear facility **PHOTO: X@UPUKNEWS1**

Melania says she supports abortion rights

CHICAGO, 4 OCT

Melania Trump revealed her support for abortion rights on Thursday, ahead of the release of her upcoming memoir, exposing a stark contrast with her husband, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, on the crucial election issue.

In a video posted to her X account on Thursday morning, the former first lady defended women's "individual freedoms" to do what they want with their bodies -- a position at odds with much of the Republican Party and her own husband, who has struggled to find a consistent message on abortion while wedged between anti-abortion supporters within his base and the majority of Americans who support abortion rights.

"Individual freedom is a fundamental principle that I safeguard," Melania Trump said in the video. "Without a doubt, there is no room for compromise when it comes to this essential right that all women possess from birth: individual freedom. What does 'my body, my choice' really mean?"

The video appears to confirm excerpts of her self-titled memoir reported by The Guardian on Wednesday.

Melania has rarely publicly expressed her personal political views and has been largely absent from the campaign trail. But in her memoir, set to be released publicly next Tuesday, she argues that the decision to end a pregnancy should be left to a woman and her doctor, "free from any intervention of pressure from the government". *—PTI*

Elon Musk to join Trump at assassination attempt site rally

Tesla CEO Elon Musk said that he will attend Donald Trump's rally which will take place at the site the former president narrowly escaped an assassination attempt in July. In a post on Trump's X account late Thursday, the Republican nominee touted his forthcoming event as "HISTORIC!" Replying to the tweet, Musk wrote: "I will be there to support!". *—Agencies*

MALAYSIAN PM IN B'DESH TO DISCUSS TRADE

DHAKA, 4 OCT

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim arrived in Bangladesh's capital on Friday to meet with interim leader Muhammad Yunus, who took over in August after the former prime minister fled during a mass uprising.

Anwar's hourslong visit will focus on trade and investment, migrant workers and the Rohingya refugee crisis, officials and media reports said.

It is the first visit by a foreign leader to Bangladesh since Yunus took over on 8 August. It is also the first state visit by a Malaysian leader to Bangladesh in 11 years. *—PTI*

Singapore hotel tycoon linked to graft case

SINGAPORE, 4 OCT

A Singapore-based property tycoon was charged on Friday over his involvement in a case linked to former Indian-origin transport minister S Iswaran who was sentenced to jail in a corruption case.

Ong Beng Seng, 78, faces one count of abetting a public servant in obtaining gifts and another charge of obstructing justice.

Iswaran, who was sentenced to one year in jail on Thursday, pleaded guilty to obtaining items such as Formula 1 tickets and a trip to Doha from Ong.

According to court documents, Ong in December 2022 instigated Iswaran to obtain a valuable thing by offering him a trip from Singapore to Doha on his private plane with a value of about USD 7,700 (Rs 6,46,582). He also arranged a one-night stay in a hotel in Doha with a value of SGD 4,737.63 (Rs 3,06,922) and a business class flight from Doha to Singapore with a value of SGD 5,700 (Rs 3,69,206) for Iswaran, the Channel News Asia (CNA) reported.

Iswaran was the chairman of the F1 steering committee and the chief negotiator with Singapore GP on business matters relating to the race. *—PTI*

Billionaire hotelier Ong Beng Seng charged with abetting a public servant in obtaining gifts & obstructing justice **PHOTO: HTTPS://BIT.LY/4ESUR6R**

Pak authorities shell tear gas on protesting PTI workers

ISLAMABAD, 4 OCT

Pakistani authorities on Friday used tear gas to disperse protesters who had gathered here at D-Chowk demanding the release of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and to show solidarity with the judiciary.

The authorities also suspended the mobile and internet services in most parts of the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi to quell the protests called by Khan.

The call for protest was given by the 71-year-old former cricketer-turned-politician who has been incarcerated at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail for more than a year.

He asked his followers to converge at the iconic venue in the capital to register a protest. It is the same venue where Khan held a sit-in for 126 days in 2014 against alleged rigging in the elections.

Talking to the media at D-Chowk, Islamabad Inspector General of Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi said that police have blocked all entry points to Islamabad and also arrested about 30 protesters.

Meanwhile, according to a post on Khan's X account, he asked everyone to reach D-Chowk for a peaceful protest. *—PTI*

20 PEOPLE KILLED, 50 MORE INJURED IN GANG ATTACK IN HAITI

HAITI, 4 OCT

Gang members attacked a small town in central Haiti early on Thursday, killing more than 20 people, including children, according to a human rights group. Another 50 people were injured as the Gran Grif gang burned homes and cars in the town of Pont-Sondé, said Bertide Harace, spokeswoman for the Commission for Dialogue, Reconciliation and Awareness to Save the Artibonite. *—PTI*

Noble Prizes to be declared amid backdrop of wars, AI

NORWAY, 4 OCT

Wars, a refugee crisis, famine and artificial intelligence could all be recognised when Nobel Prize announcements begin next week under a shroud of violence.

The prize week coincides with the 7 October anniversary of the Hamas-led attacks on Israel, which began a year of bloodshed and war across the Middle East.

The literature and science prizes could be immune. But the Peace Prize, which recognizes efforts to end conflict, will be awarded in an atmosphere of ratcheting international violence — if awarded at all.

Withholding the Nobel Peace is not new. It has been suspended 19 times in the past, including during the world wars. The last time it was not awarded was in 1972.

Civil grassroot groups, and international organisations with missions to mitigate violence in the Middle East could be recognised. Nominees are kept secret for 50 years, but qualified nominators often publicise their picks. Academics at the Free University Amsterdam said they have nominated the Middle East-based organisations EcoPeace, Women Wage Peace and Women of the Sun for peace efforts between Israelis and Palestinians. The announcements begin Monday with the physiology or medicine prize, followed on subsequent days by the physics, chemistry, literature and peace awards. *—PTI*

CLIMATE CHAOS

Taiwan resumes work after typhoon Krathon

KAOHSIUNG, 4 OCT

Work, classes and flights resumed across Taiwan on Friday after typhoon Krathon brought torrential rainfall to the island but finally dissipated over a mountain range.

A heavy rain advisory remained in place for the northern coast and mountainous areas, where two landslides occurred early Friday.

Schools and businesses reopened with the exception of the city of Kaohsiung, Pingtung County, and some parts of Hualien County and New Taipei. Domestic flights, which had been grounded for two days, resumed.Krathon lashed Kaohsiung with winds up to 126 kph and higher gusts. It felled trees and flooded roads. Heavy rains and flooding also occurred along Taiwan's southern and eastern coasts. Mountainous Taitung County saw 171cm of rain over six days. Two people died earlier in the week and one person remained missing.

Krathon was one of only two typhoons in recent history to "die" over Taiwan, beside Typhoon Trami, in 2001.

A sanitation worker of Kaohsiung city government clears debris in the aftermath of typhoon Krathon in southern Taiwan **PHOTO: AP**

BOSNIA

A severe rainstorm struck Bosnia overnight Friday, killing at least 14 people and flooding several towns and villages in central and southern parts of the country. Rescue services in the south of the country reported several people missing and called on volunteers and the army to assist as roads were closed and houses left without electricity.

NEW ZEALAND

The New Zealand city of Dunedin was cut off by road due to flooding Friday after recording its wettest day in more than a century.

More than 80 people who lived in low-lying areas spent the night in emergency shelters after the rain began Thursday. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Gold hits fresh all-time high of ₹78,000/10 gm

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

Gold prices rose by Rs 150 to hit a fresh all-time high of Rs 78,450 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday on increased demand from jewellers and retailers driven by the ongoing festive season. The precious metal closed at Rs 78,300 per 10 grams on Thursday. Silver surged Rs 1,035 to Rs 94,200 per kg from Rs 93,165 per kg in the previous session, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity climbed Rs 200 to reach an all-time high level of Rs 78,100 per 10 grams. Bullion traders attributed the rise in precious metal prices to the emergence of buying by jewellers and retailers driven by the ongoing 'Navratri' festival. In futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for December delivery rose Rs 131 or 0.17 per cent to Rs 76,375 per 10 grams, hovering near an all-time high. "Silver witnessed steady moves as participants widened their bets on a firm spot demand seen in physical markets due to the start of the festive season in India," Maneesh Sharma, AVP - Commodities & Currencies, Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers, said. Silver contracts for December delivery climbed Rs 219 or 0.24 per cent to Rs 93,197 per kg on the MCX. "In silver futures on Comex suggest prices remain firm towards the start of the next week with new highs may be tested in the upcoming sessions," Sharma added. In the Asian trading hours, Comex gold is trading flat at USD 2,678.90 per ounce. *—PTI*

Rupee settles flat at 83.96 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 4 OCT

Rupee traded on a flat note and settled at 83.96 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday as surging crude oil prices amid volatile geopolitics weighed on the local unit, while the Reserve Bank intervened to prevent the domestic currency from touching its lowest level. Forex traders said a weak American currency against major Asian rivals as well as RBI's move to sell dollars supported the local unit. However, it was weighed down by weak domestic equity markets and unabated outflow of foreign funds. At the interbank foreign exchange, the local unit opened at 83.96 and moved between a narrow range of 83.93 and 83.97 against the greenback.

Services sector growth lowest since Nov 2023

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

Services sector growth in India, in terms of new business, international sales and output, rose at the slowest rates since November 2023, HSBC India Services PMI showed on Friday. The key measures of sectoral performance tracked by the HSBC India Services PMI survey, compiled by S&P Global, continued to point to historically strong rates of expansion. The index value was above the neutral mark of 50.0 in September. Falling from 60.9 in August to 57.7, the headline figure signalled a softer, albeit still historically-robust rate of expansion. The indices vary between 0 and 100, with a reading above 50 indicating an overall increase compared to the previous month, and below 50 an overall decrease. One factor that constrained total sales growth was a softer increase in new export orders. The rate of expansion moderated to the weakest in 2024 so far. Still, some firms noted gains from Asia, Europe, North America, the Middle East, and the US. Manufacturing sector also slipped for second consecutive month in September, PMI data showed earlier. *—PTI*

'W Asia conflict won't impact India's crude imports'

India currently imports oil from around 40 different countries, including Russia, Iraq PHOTO: X

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

The ongoing conflict between Israel and Iran is not expected to have a significant impact on India's crude oil imports, as experts pointed out that India's crude imports from Iran are almost negligible.

India currently imports oil from around 40 different countries, including Russia, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, and the USA, which helps manage its supply needs. However, the conflict does increase the risk of price volatility in global oil markets.

Experts suggest that any sharp rise in crude oil prices above USD 80 per barrel is likely only if the conflict escalates and disrupts key supply routes, such as the Strait of Hormuz, a critical passage for global oil shipments.

"India's has almost nil supplies of crude oil directly from Iran. India have also been able to adopt a very balanced and matured approach in such situation as seen in recent international conflicts. Therefore, crude oil supplies may not be an issue as such for India but price volatility will be there with momentary spikes and monthly average prices on higher side. Any increase in average crude oil prices above USD 80 should be expected only in case of a serious conflict escalation in the logistic supply lines like Strait of Hormuz" said MK Surana, Former Chairman, HPCL told ANI. The crude oil prices have already surged due to the volatility in the Middle East. If Israel follows through on its threats to attack Iran's oil and gas infrastructure, it could lead to further price increases. Iran, which produces about 3.3 million barrels per day (mbpd) of crude oil, might retaliate by blocking the Strait of Hormuz, causing major disruptions in global oil supply.

Experts added that such a scenario would pose a challenge for India, as the country imports 88 per cent of its oil requirements and relies heavily on oil for its energy needs.

Weak global demand projections, uncertainty surrounding China's economic recovery, and the possibility of OPEC+ rolling back production cuts may ease the impact. *—ANI*

INVESTORS LOSE ₹16,00,000 CR IN 5 DAYS

Both Sensex, Nifty nosedived amid rising tensions in West Asia

MUMBAI, 4 OCT

Market investors became poorer by Rs 16.26 lakh crore in five days of heavy correction in equities amid worsening tensions in the Middle East and foreign fund outflows.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms slumped Rs 16,26,691.48 crore to Rs 4,60,89,598.54 crore (USD 5.49 trillion) in five days of the market crash.

Since Friday last, the BSE Sensex tumbled 4,147.67 points or 4.83 per cent.

"Negative bias continued for 5th straight session amid rising fears of a surge in crude oil prices due to the ongoing west Asia war," said Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd.

Falling for the fifth day running on Friday, the BSE Sensex tumbled 808.65 points or 0.98 per cent to settle at 81,688.45. The benchmark hit a low of 81,532.68 and a high of 83,368.32 during the day, reflecting a wild swing of 1,835.64 points. The NSE Nifty 50 slumped 235.50 points or 0.93 per cent to settle at 25,014.60.

The worsening tensions in the Middle East and foreign fund outflows led to the market crisis PHOTO: PTI

"The bearish sentiment continued as investors are monitoring the escalating conflict in the Middle East and have adopted a sell-on recovery strategy. "Crude prices have moved up sharply but may be restricted due to an increase in production from OPEC+. The drag was across sectors led by realty, auto, and FMCG except IT stocks, which gained due to expected benefits from US rate cuts and defensive nature. "The pessimism on the market is expected to continue in the near term amidst rising crude prices and fund flows to cheaper markets like China," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said. From the 30 Sensex firms, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints, Nestle, Bharti Airtel, UltraTech Cement, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, and HDFC Bank were the major laggards. Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Tata Motors, Axis Bank, and State Bank of India were among the gainers. Foreign Institutional Investors offloaded equities worth Rs 15,243.27 crore on Thursday.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory. Markets in mainland China are closed due to a holiday. European markets were trading higher in mid-session deals. The US markets ended lower on Thursday.Among the indices, realty lost 1.60 per cent, auto (1.50 per cent), telecommunication (1.25 per cent), utilities (1.20 per cent), consumer discretionary (1.18 per cent) and commodities (1.14 per cent). *—PTI*

PER CAPITA INCOME TO DOUBLE

Living standards to see steepest rise, says FM

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

Nirmala Sitharaman PHOTO: PTI

India will witness the steepest rise in living standards of the common man on the back of the government's initiatives and the efforts towards doubling per capita income in few years, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Friday.

Addressing the 3rd edition of the Kautilya Economic Conclave, the minister stressed that inequality in India has declined with the Gini coefficient, a statistical tool to measure inequity, showing improvement in urban as well as rural areas.

"I expect these improvements to continue as the effects of the last ten years of economic and structural reforms manifest more thoroughly in the data in the coming years as the Covid shock fades from the economy," The Indian government, she said, will try to double the per capita income in a matter of a few years for its 1.4 billion strong population (which makes up 18 per cent of the global total) notwithstanding the geopolitical challenges threatening world peace.

Speaking on the country's financial system, she said the soundness and resilience of India's banking sector have been underpinned by a sustained policy focus on asset quality improvements, enhanced provisioning for bad loans, sustained capital adequacy, and a rise in profitability.

Ensuring that the financial system stays healthy and the cycle lasts longer is another of our core policy priorities, the minister said. *—PTI*

Apple to open 4 more stores in India

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

iPhone maker Apple on Friday said it will open four more stores in India, located in Pune, Bengaluru, Delhi-NCR and Mumbai.

The company said it will also roll out its first-ever "made in India" iPhone 16 Pro and iPhone 16 Pro Max series devices this month.

"We're thrilled to build our teams as we plan to open more stores in India because we're inspired by the creativity and passion of our customers across this country. We can't wait for them to have even more opportunities to discover and shop for our amazing products and services, and connect with our extraordinary, knowledgeable team members," Apple's senior Vice President of Retail, Deirdre O'Brien, said in a statement.

In April 2023, Apple opened its two stores in India, one in Delhi and the other in Mumbai.

"Future Apple Retail stores are planned in Bengaluru, Pune, Delhi-NCR and Mumbai," the statement said.

According to people aware of the development, the stores are likely to be opened next year.

The company announced that it will now manufacture iPhone 16 series smartphones in India.

"Apple is now manufacturing the entire iPhone 16 lineup, including iPhone 16 Pro and iPhone 16 Pro Max, in India," the statement said.

Apple began manufacturing the iPhone in India in 2017.

Meanwhile, Zoom Video Communications on Friday announced the launch of its industry-leading Zoom Phone in India, commencing with the availability of Zoom Phone service with native India phone numbers in the Maharashtra Telecom Circle (Pune). *—PTI*

Vedanta acquires hockey team Kalinga Lancers

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

Vedanta Ltd on Friday announced acquisition of Bhubaneswar-based hockey team Kalinga Lancers ahead of Hockey India League (HIL).

This acquisition reinforces the company's commitment to promoting sports in Odisha, a region where Vedanta has played a key role in socio-economic development. It also reported a rise in production of aluminium, zinc and iron ore in the September quarter. Production of steel, mined metal overseas and oil and gas dropped. Aluminium output grew 3 per cent to 6,09,000 tonnes in the second quarter compared to the same period last year. *—PTI*

'Indian rupee depreciated last quarter, long term outlook positive'

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

The Indian rupee faced strong competition in the last quarter from other major Asian currencies, particularly Japan's yen and the Chinese yuan.

According to data, the Indian rupee depreciated by 0.6 per cent over the past three months, while Japan's yen and the Chinese yuan appreciated against the U.S. dollar during the same period.

The Japanese yen saw a sharp appreciation of 9 per cent against the dollar, while the Chinese yuan rose by more than 3 per cent. Experts noted that the decline in the Indian rupee was not due to any long-term factors but rather short-term events that provided a boost to the Japanese and Chinese currencies.

PHOTO: ANI

Yen appreciated significantly after the country announced its first rate cut in 20 years, which made its markets more attractive to investors. The increase in liquidity within the Japanese economy resulted in a stronger yen against the dollar.

Similarly, China's currency benefited from a stimulus package announced by the government. "The Indian rupee has depreciated by 0.6 per cent in the last quarter against the dollar, while other major Asian currencies like Japan's yen and the Chinese yuan have appreciated. The reason behind this is not a long-term effect; these two currencies appreciated due to short-term events like the rate cut in Japan and the Chinese stimulus package, which contributed to the appreciation. The Indian rupee remains strong against the dollar and improved following the Fed's rate cut. It will be in range of 83.56-84.28" said Ajay Kedia, Director, Kedia Advisory in an exclusive conversation with ANI. *—ANI*

Former NSE chief settles SEBI case, to pay ₹643 cr

MUMBAI, 4 OCT

The National Stock Exchange (NSE), its former chief Vikram Limaye and eight others on Friday settled with markets regulator Sebi a case pertaining to alleged bypass of trading access point (TAP) system by certain brokers after paying Rs 643 crore.

Apart from NSE and Limaye, those who settled the case are -- Umesh Jain G. M. Shenoy, Narayan Neelakantan, V. R. Narasimhan, Kamala K, Nilesh Tinaikar, R Nandakumar and Mayur Sindhwad. TAP was a software application deployed by NSE in 2008 on the servers of trading members for managing connections and messages (orders/trades) of such members. Trading members, registered with NSE, connected to TAP to establish communication with the NSE trading system. SEBI said that NSE, on behalf of itself and other applicants, has remitted the settlement amount of Rs 643 crore on 25 September the receipt of which is confirmed. Accordingly, "the proceedings initiated against the applicants vide the SCN (show cause notice) dated 28 February, 2023 are hereby disposed of," it added.

After conclusion of the examination, a show cause notice was issued by Sebi in February 2023, alleging NSE did not take remedial measures to prevent-discourage any possible bypass of TAP among others. *—PTI*

VEG MEAL COST UP BY 11%

Home-cooked meals become dearer in Sept as onion, potato prices shoot up

MUMBAI, 4 OCT

Home-cooked meals became dearer in September compared to a year ago as prices of onion, potato and tomatoes shot up, a report said on Friday.

A vegetarian meal cost went up 11 per cent over year to Rs 31.3 in September from Rs 28.1 in September 2023, and inched up from Rs 31.2 in the preceding August, as per the report by domestic rating agency Crisil.

Attributing the rise to firming up in the vegetable prices that account for 37 per cent of a thali cost, the "roti, rice, rate" report elaborated on the factors affecting the overall cost.

REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

Prices of pulses jumped 14 per cent on year due a drop in production, while fuel dropped 11 per cent due to a price cut earlier in the year, the report said. In the case of a non-vegetarian thali, the meal cost dropped by 2 per cent on year to Rs 59.3 on a 13 per cent decline in broiler prices which have a 50 per cent weightage.

A non-veg meal cost, which also includes the payouts on vegetables but dal gets replaced with broiler, was flat compared to the rate in August, the report said. *—PTI*

India's forex kitty jumps $12B to hit record high of $704.885B

MUMBAI, 4 OCT

India's forex reserves jumped by USD 12.588 billion to a new all-time high of USD 704.885 billion for the week ended 27 September, the Reserve Bank said on Friday.

The overall kitty had swelled by USD 2.838 billion to USD 692.296 billion in the previous reporting week.

The USD 12.588 billion would be one of the highest weekly rises ever and this is the first time the reserves have crossed the USD 700 billion mark.

For the week ended 27 September, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by USD 10.468 billion to USD 616.154 billion, the data released on Friday showed.

For the week ended 27 September, foreign currency assets increased by USD 10.468 billion to USD 616.154 billion REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves increased by USD 2.184 billion to USD 65.796 billion during the week, the central bank said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by USD 8 million to USD 18.547 billion, it said. India's reserve position with the IMF was down by USD 71 million to USD 4.387 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed. *—PTI*

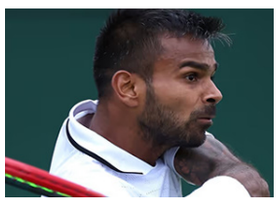


PHOTO: PTI

Nagal to compete in World Tennis League

ABU DHABI, 4 OCT

India's top singles player Sumit Nagal will feature in the upcoming World Tennis League which will have many global stars such as world number five Daniil Medvedev, and women's US Open champion Aryna Sabalenka, the organizers announced on Friday. It is not yet known which team Nagal, ranked 83 in the world, would play for in the League, scheduled to take place at the iconic Etihad Arena from December 19 to 22. The WTL features two Olympic gold medallists, five Grand Slam champions, six of the top 12 male players, and six of the top 10 female players, including world No. 1 and French Open champion Iga Świątek.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Bopanna-Dodig pair advances to second round

DUBAI, 4 OCT

Indian tennis veteran Rohan Bopanna and his Croatian partner Ivan Dodig suffered a shocking defeat in the first round of the China Open ATP 500 tournament on Saturday. The second-seeded Indo-Croatian pair lost 5-7, 6-7 to the unseeded team of Francisco Cerundolo and Nicolas Jarry in a round-of-16 match that lasted one hour and 31 minutes. Bopanna's regular partner, Matthew Ebden, chose not to participate in the tournament. Bopanna and Dodig have teamed up in the past, with their best performance being a runner-up finish at the 2017 ATP Montreal Masters 1000. The 44-year-old Indian has had a successful year, winning the Australian Open and Miami Open. However, Bopanna and Ebden recently faced an early exit in the round of 16 at the US Open.—*PTI*

HIL to return after 7 long years; women's added

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

The much-awaited Hockey India League (HIL) will return after seven long years in a new avatar, where both the men's and women's teams will participate in the event beginning 28 December. While the men's competition will have eight teams, six sides will feature in the women's event which is being held for the first time. The league will be played in two venues Rourkela for men and Ranchi for women -- from 28 December to 1 February. The sport's world governing body, FIH has given a sanction of 10 years for HIL. The player's auction for the league will be held here from 13 to 15 October.—*PTI*

India to play Vietnam football-friendly

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

The Indian men's football team will play an international friendly against Vietnam on 12 October following the cancellation of a tri-nation tournament in the Southeast Asian country. Lebanon pulled out of the tri-nation event, citing difficulties in flying out of the country due to the ongoing crisis at home. The tournament was planned in the FIFA international match window from 7-15 October. India was earlier scheduled to play against Vietnam on October 9 and Lebanon on October 12 in the tournament at the Thien Truong Stadium in Nam Dinh, around 100 km from Hanoi."The Indian senior men's team will face Vietnam in a one-off friendly match on Saturday.—*PTI*

Dominant SA crush WI by 10 wickets

Mlaba returned career-best figures of 4/29

DUBAI, 4 OCT

South Africa proved to be too strong for West Indies as they romped to a 10-wicket win to begin their campaign in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup on a rousing note here on Friday. Asked to bat first, West Indies were restricted to 118 for six but the total would have been far less than that, had it not been for Stafanie Taylor's unbeaten 41-ball 44.

For South Africa, left-arm spinner Nonkululeko Mlaba returned career-best figures of 4/29, while Marizanne Kapp ended with 2/14.

Skipper Laura Wolvaardt (59 off 55 balls) and Tazmin Brits (57 off 52 balls), who had earlier in the day pulled off an excellent catch at cover point, got the job done easily for last edition's runners-up.

Nonkululeko Mlaba PHOTO: X

Earlier, South Africa bowlers maintained a tight line and length to force the West Indians into the back foot, and the day's first breakthrough came about when Marizanne Kapp had Hayley Matthews (10 off 11 balls) caught behind.

Qiana Joseph's painstaking stay in the middle ended when she was bowled by left-arm spinner Mlaba in the fifth over.West Indies slipped to 32/3 when Kapp dismissed Deandra Dottin (13 off 11 balls). From there, the Windies could not score enough runs to challenge their opponents.

Brief scores:
West Indies: 118/6 in 20 overs (Taylor 44; Nonkululeko Mlaba 4/29) South Africa: 119 for no loss in 17.5 overs (Laura Wolvaardt not out 59, Tazmin Brits not out 57). —*PTI*

TODAY'S MATCH
■Australia vs Sri Lanka Time: 3.30 pm
■Bangladesh vs England Time: 7.30 pm

ICC T20 WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

India's Asha Sobhana, right, celebrates after taking the wicket of New Zealand's Georgia Plimmer, left, during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 match between India and New Zealand at Dubai International Stadium, United Arab Emirates, on Friday PHOTO: PTI

Mumbai spinners spark RoI collapse

LUCKNOW, 4 OCT

The seasoned spin duo of Shams Mulani and Tanush Kotian became catalysts of the Rest of India's sudden middle-order collapse that saw them lose six wickets for only 23 runs here Friday, putting Mumbai within sniffing distance of an Irani Cup triumph despite Abhimanyu Easwaran's heroic 191.

In reply to Mumbai's first innings score of 537, RoI were cruising along at 393 for 4, riding on Easwaran and Test team's second keeper Dhruv Jurel's (93) 165-run stand for the fifth wicket. However, left-arm spinner Mulani (3/122 in 40 overs) broke Rest's resistance with quick dismissals of the two set batters in a space of 10 minutes to give the match a decisive turn on the fourth day. Off-spinner Kotian (3/101 in 27 overs) then polished off the tail

Shams and Tanush PHOTO: X

as RoI were all out for 416, handing a 121-run first-innings lead to Mumbai.Prithvi Shaw (76 off 105 balls) then came out all guns blazing as the ball started turning square with Mumbai finishing the day at 153 for 6 with an overall lead of 274.

Brief Scores:
Mumbai 537 and 153/6 (Prithvi Shaw 76, Saransh Jain 4/67).

Rest of India 1st Innings: 416 (Abhimanyu Easwaran 191, Dhruv Jurel 93, Shams Mulani 3/122, Tanush 3/101). Mumbai lead by 274 runs. —*PTI*

ISSF JUNIOR WORLD C'SHIP

Indian trio wins gold in men's 25m rapid-fire pistol

LIMA, 4 OCT

The trio of Mukesh Nelavalli, Raajwardan Patil, and Harsimar Singh Rattha secured victory in the men's 25m rapid-fire pistol team competition, marking India's 11th gold medal at the ongoing ISSF Junior World Championship here.

This triumph also brought Mukesh his fourth gold of the championship, including an individual gold in the 25m pistol event. India remained at the top of the medal tally with a total of 16 medals which included one silver and four bronze. China is in second place with three gold and one silver. In the individual finals, both Mukesh and Raajwardan

The trio of Mukesh Nelavalli, Raajwardan Patil, and Harsimar Singh secured victory in the men's 25m rapid-fire pistol team competition PHOTO: X

advanced, but Raajwardan finished fourth with 17 hits in the first six series. Mukesh exited earlier, finishing fifth with 10 hits out of 25 targets.

In the junior men's 50m rifle-prone event, Parikshit Singh Brar was the best Indian finisher, scoring 623.0 over 60 shots. Shivendra Bahadur Singh placed 14th with 618.4, while Vedant Nitin Waghmare came in 24th with a score of 613.2. —*PTI*

Second-seeded Yash and Shruti bow out in q/fs

MUMBAI, 4 OCT

Unseeded shuttlers Darshan Pujari and Siya Singh knocked out the men's and women's second seeds Yash Thakur and Shruti Mundada respectively in the quarterfinals of Shri Nandu Natekar Memorial Maharashtra State Senior Inter District (Team) and State Badminton Championship here on Friday.

Pune's Pujari dominated the rallies and outplayed Yash Shah from the same city, charging to straight games 21-16, 21-18 win to advance to the semi-finals.Siya knocked out Shruti Mundada from Pune with a win by 17-21, 21-17, 21-11 or a place in the last four. Men's top seed Varun Kapur (Pune) survived a scare from Nagesh Chamle (Latur) before clinching a 15-21, 21-14, 21-14 win. —*PTI*

EUROPA LEAGUE

Manchester United's English defender Harry Maguire celebrates scoring his team's third goal PHOTO: @MANUTD

Maguire salvages draw for ManU

PORTO, 4 OCT

Manchester United narrowly avoided another embarrassing defeat as substitute Harry Maguire headed in an injury-time equalizer to salvage a 3-3 draw against Porto in the Europa League on Thursday after Erik ten Hag's team had given up an early 2-0 lead and seen Bruno Fernandes sent off for a second straight game.

Fernandes was shown a second booking in the 81st minute for a high boot that caught defender Nehuen Perez as he tried to connect with a cross into the box.

"We started the game very well, we dominated, we scored two good goals but then we lost control," Ten Hag said. "The middle part was no good and then we finished very well. ... We got the equalizer so it is good for the spirit."

Fernandes had been shown a straight read in a 3-0 loss to Tottenham in the Premier League on Sunday that upped the pressure on Ten Hag. The Dutch manager seemed to be in more trouble when United gave up an early 2-0 lead to trail 3-2 when Pepê produced a cross from the right for his fellow forward Samu to fire his second and goal high into the net five minutes into the second half.

But Maguire headed home a corner in the first minute of injury time to salvage a point for United, which now has two draws in the league phase and has failed to win any of its last four games in all competitions.

United couldn't have asked for a better start in Portugal, though. Christian Eriksen teed up Marcus Rashford, who showed great footwork to burst into the area before beating goalkeeper Diogo Costa with a low strike into the bottom left-hand corner of the net in the seventh minute. —*PTI*

Iga Swiatek parts ways with coach Tomasz

PARIS, 4 OCT

The Polish tennis player announced the split Friday, saying the decision was taken together.

During the three years, Swiatek worked with Wiktorowski, the Polish player who won four of her five Grand Slam titles and rose to the top of the women's rankings.

"After 3 years of the greatest achievements in my career, together with my coach Tomasz Wiktorowski we decided to part way," Swiatek wrote in a post on Instagram. "I want to start with a big thank you and appreciation for our work together." Swiatek appointed Wiktorowski as coach at the end of the 2021 season. He helped her capture 19 of her 22 career titles and an Olympic bronze medal in Paris in August. "Coach Wiktorowski joined my team for three seasons when I strongly needed changes and a fresh approach to my game. —*PTI*

PHOTO: @IGA.SWIATEK

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday played chess with Kushagra Agrawal, the country's youngest FIDE (World Chess Federation) rated player PHOTO: PTI

IN Rally Sprint C'ship debuts in central India

NEW DELHI, 4 OCT

The FMSCI Indian National Rally Sprint Championship for two-wheelers is set to make its debut in central India in Indore on Saturday, marking a significant milestone for the region.

Round four of this motorcycle rally will be held at NATRAX, the state-of-the-art automobile testing and certification center located in Pithampur, near Indore.

In addition to the 13 classes competing in the National Championship round, a special Sprint Support Rally will be organized for local youth stated a release.

This includes seven classes exclusively for young riders, offering them a unique chance to experience rallying and compete for their own set of trophies.

This move is aimed at promoting the sport in central India.

Notable riders participating in the event include Nashik's Shamim Khan, Bhopal's Asif Ali, Mumbai's Badal Doshi, and Pune's Pinkesh Thakkar and Amarendra Sathe.

This round will feature 20 classes, across both the National Championship and Support Rally, creating a competitive platform for India's best riders.

Round Five will be held in Guwahati on November 24 and the season will culminate with the finals in Pune or Bangalore on December 14-15 where the top contenders from each zone will vie for the top honors. —*PTI*

PALESTINIANS CLAIM DISCRIMINATION

FIFA opts not to suspend Israel but will investigate

ZURICH, 4 OCT

FIFA stopped short of suspending the Israeli soccer federation on Thursday but asked for a disciplinary investigation of possible discrimination alleged by Palestinian soccer officials.

A senior FIFA panel overseeing governance will separately investigate "the participation in Israeli competitions of Israeli football teams allegedly based in the territory of Palestine," soccer's governing body said after a meeting of its ruling Council.

The Palestinian soccer federation has consistently asked FIFA for more than a decade to take action against the Israeli soccer body for incorporating teams from West Bank settlements in its leagues.

The compromise decisions

Palestine players PHOTO: @FUTBOLPALESTINE

came more than four months after Palestinian officials had urged FIFA to suspend Israel's membership at a meeting in May.

The request to FIFA's congress in May also cited "international law violations" in Gaza during the Israel-Hamas conflict and directed the soccer body to its statutory commitments on human rights and against discrimination.

FIFA delayed deciding in May until after a legal review scheduled for July, then pushed back the issue two more times until a meeting of its 37-member Council on Thursday.

"The FIFA Council has implemented due diligence on this very sensitive matter and, based on a thorough assessment, we have followed the advice of the independent experts," FIFA president Gianni Infantino said in a statement.

Ahead of the meeting, Palestinian soccer federation leader Jibril Rajoub and its vice president Susan Shalabi came to Zurich to lobby FIFA officials.

"I trust and I expect that FIFA will take the right decision," Rajoub told The Associated Press. "I am asking for the Council to follow their statutes."

The latest process follows a pattern under Infantino and his predecessor Sepp Blatter of Palestinian requests for FIFA to uphold its legal rules and the question then being steered toward ad hoc panels and other committees. —*PTI*

FIFA rules on international transfers contrary: EU court

The European Union's top court said Friday that some FIFA rules on player transfers are contrary to European Union legislation relating to competition and freedom of movement, in a ruling that will likely lead to a shakeup of the soccer market's regulations and change the sport's economy. The court's ruling came after former France international Lassana Diarra legally challenged FIFA rules following a dispute with a club dating back to a decade ago. Diarra argued that FIFA's restrictions meant he was unable to find a new club after his contract with Russian club Lokomotiv Moscow was terminated in 2014. FIFA's rules state that if a player terminates his contract without "just cause," the player and any club wishing to sign him are jointly liable for paying compensation to the previous club. —*PTI*